A WONDERFUL STORY

OLD TIME EVANGELICAL EVANGELISM

BEING A SIMPLE ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE AND TIME OF
THE REV. JACOB ALBRIGHT

By
REV. A. STAPLETON, A.M., M.S., D.D.

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THE REV. JACOB ALBRIGHT.
(*Founder of the Evangelical Association.*)

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OLD TIME EVANGELICAL EVANGELISM

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OF

THE REV. JACOB ALBRIGHT

FOUNDER OF THE EVANGELICAL ASSOCIATION

WITH

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND ANTECEDENTS

ALSO

A BIOGRAPHICAL SUPPLEMENT

EMBRACING BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF ALBRIGHT'S COLLEAGUES AND COWORKERS, AND HIS CHIEF CONTEMPORARY EVANGELISTS

By

REV. A. STAPLETON, A.M., M.S., D.D.

Member of the
Pennsylvania Historical Society, and the Pennsylvania German Society.
Author of "Natural History of the Bible," "Evangelical Annals," "Memorials of the Huguenots," "Flashlights on Evangelical History," "The Henkel Memorial," &c., &c.

"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will show thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee." DEUT. 32: 7.

HARRISBURG, PA.
PUBLISHING HOUSE OF THE UNITED EVANGELICAL CHURCH
1917

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Harrisburg, Pa.

Introduction.

THIS "Wonderful Story" is Dr. Stapleton's last contribution to the historical records of the Church that he loved and served so faithfully, and it is the only one of his works whose publication was deferred until after his sudden and lamented death. Having been obliged to edit this work since the departure of the Author, and therefore unable to consult with him about it, I have deemed it best to leave unchanged, for the most part, the form and order and arrangement of the great mass of valuable material so industriously gathered and sifted by him, realizing, as I did, that the nature of the treatment involved unavoidable repetitions in some parts of the story.

The title of this book is not a misnomer. It is indeed a "wonderful story" which it tells—a story of heroic human devotion, self-sacrifice and triumph in the service of Christ, and of Divine grace and guidance and power in the establishment of His work among men. And it is indeed a beautiful illustration of the ways of Divine Providence in choosing "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty, and base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence." (*1 Cor. 1: 26-29.*)

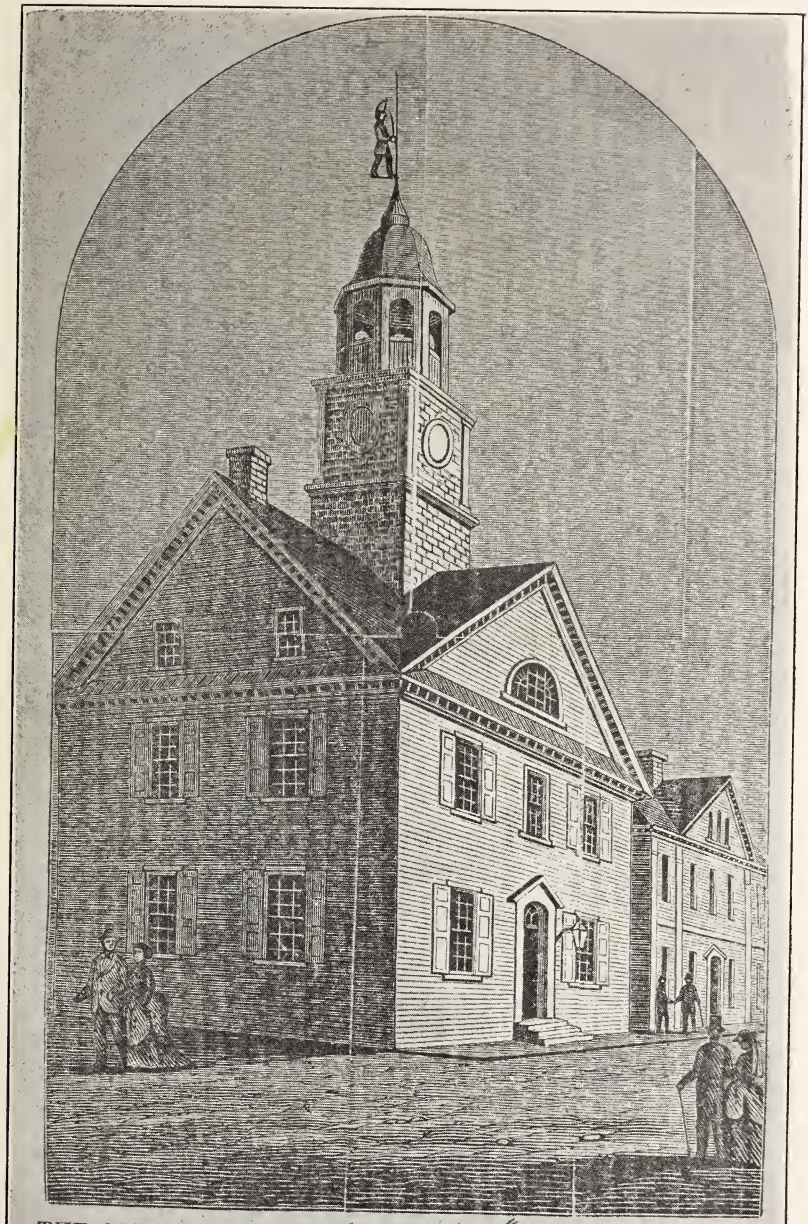
This is a book for the preachers, a book for the people—"the common people"—a live coal to fire the heart and touch the lips. Did not my heart burn within me, as I passed over the pages of the manuscript, pen in hand, again and again, to prepare it for the compositors. That it may serve as a timely reminder, a burning exhortation, and a holy inspiration to the pastors and people of the United Evangelical Church and the Evangelical Association, especially, is my ardent prayer and hope, as I am sure this was, *and is,* also the desire of my departed friend and brother beloved, the author of the book, who is now enjoying the high and

holy fellowship of **Albright** and his co-laborers in the Heavenly Home.

God of our fathers whom, long years ago,
Thou didst call forth to walk and work with Thee,
We pray Thee bless this Story of Thy grace,
Of works wrought through Thy servants by Thy power,
That, being dead, they still may loudly speak
To us, their children of the later days,
That we their faith may follow, as we reap
The ripening harvests of their toils and tears.

H. B. HARTZLER.

Harrisburg, Pa., September 1, 1917.



THE OLD COURT HOUSE, "YORKTOWN," WHERE THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS HELD ITS SESSIONS, 1777-1778.

An Evangelical preaching place from 1806 till 1830.

Author's Preface.

AT the General Conference of the United Evangelical Church, held at Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in the year 1906, a resolution was adopted requesting the writer to prepare a brief history of **Jacob Albright.** This volume is the author's response to the request of the General Conference. While the work of its preparation has been congenial and pleasant, it has also been very difficult, chiefly on account of the scanty data relating to the personal life and work of its revered subject. From the fact that **Albright** was very methodical in his life and work, and that he strictly enjoined his ministerial associates to keep a journal, we conclude that he himself also kept one which, unfortunately, has been lost to the Church.

The first biographer of **Albright** was his immediate successor, **Rev. George Miller,** who in 1814 published a brief memoir, of which however not a single copy is now known to exist. This memoir, in connection with that of **Miller,** was republished by the Church in 1834,[1] and these again in connection with memoirs of **Walter** and **Dreisbach** added, in 1879.[2]

In his memoir of **Albright,** his biographer **(Miller)** gives as an extract, in the first person, an extensive account of **Albright's** conversion, experiences, and call to the ministry, which, because of its character and literary style differing from that of **Miller,** leads us to the belief that the latter had access to his journal.

The period of **Albright's** evangelistic activity was characterized by religious unrest in Pennsylvania, especially among the Germans. That there was a general and deeply felt need of a better spiritual life in the churches, is evinced by the successful work of the Methodists, who were English, and also that of the Reformed evangelists, **Otterbein, Pfrimmer, Gueting, Ettinger, Houtz,** and others, and which eventuated in the formation of the United Brethren Church.

1 "Albrecht und Miller," a 32mo book of 176 pages.
2 "Albright and Co-Laborers," 12mo, 335 pages.

We have treated these movements and **Albright's** relation to them in such a manner, that the discerning reader will see the reason for the separate and distinctive work of **Albright,** and also to show the growth of the denominational spirit that eventuated in the formation of the Evangelical Association.

The purely literary reader may find it difficult to understand why there is such a studied reference to persons and localities in this work. The explanation lies in the fact that **Albright** was not only an evangelist and reformer, but also the founder of a church. Except in a few instances, he had no churches in which to preach, and it became necessary to secure large rooms in private dwellings, as also barns and orchards, in which to preach.

The men who thus received him and welcomed his ministry became, for the most part, pillars in the Evangelical Church. Some of them became ministers, while many have had an unbroken line of ministerial representatives from that beginning of the Church until now. Moreover, many of those homes, or the localities in which they were, became the seat of classes or church organizations. The devout student of history will find in many of these references seemingly irrelevant, but very remarkable instances of Divine providence.

While previous works by the present writer, as well as others, have been freely made use of in the preparation of this volume, and although over a century has passed since **Albright** died, yet we feel confident that the Evangelical Church will find in this work a sufficient amount of new material, and a re-setting of known facts, to fully justify the call of the General Conference for the preparation of the volume.

A. STAPLETON.

Jersey Shore, Pa., 1913.

Contents.

Introduction,		3
Author's Preface,		5
Sketch of Dr. Stapleton,		11
Chapter I.	The Pennsylvania Germans,	13
Chapter II.	Early Life of Albright,	23
Chapter III.	Albright's Work in Relation to Protestant Faith and Evangelism,	36
Chapter IV.	Albright in Relation to the Methodists and United Brethren,	45
Chapter V.	The First Sowing,	52
Chapter VI.	The Widening Field,	65
Chapter VII.	Gathering the Harvest,	78
Chapter VIII.	Ecclesiastical Organization,	92
Chapter IX.	Denominational Development,	100
Chapter X.	Last Days of Albright,	108
Chapter XI.	In Perils Oft,	115
Chapter XII.	Biographical Supplement,	122

Illustrations.

PAGE.

THE REV. JACOB ALBRIGHT, ...*Frontispiece*

THE OLD COURT HOUSE, "Yorktown," Where the Continental Congress Held Its Sessions, ... 4

ALBRIGHT FARM, ... 23

PRESENT APPEARANCE (1917) OF "OLD ST. ELIAS" CHURCH, at Mifflinburg, Pa., in which Albright and Coworkers Frequently Preached, ... 65

J. DREISBACH, ... 78

HOUSE WHERE FIRST CONFERENCE WAS HELD, 1807, ... 92

PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRODUCTION OF TITLE PAGE OF THE FIRST EVANGELICAL DISCIPLINE, ... 95

SITE AND FARM WHERE ALBRIGHT DIED, ... 108

TOMBSTONE OF JACOB ALBRIGHT, ... 110

A "SADDLE-BAGS MAN," 115

FACSIMILE OF LICENSE AS A MINISTER ON PROBATION GRANTED TO JOHN DREISBACH, ... 122

REV. HENRY NIEBEL, ... 135

REV. A. ETTINGER, ... 142

Portrait of Jacob Albright.

The following explanatory statement from **Dr. Stapleton**, written at Jersey Shore, Pa., September 25, 1913, accompanied the portrait on the opposite page:

"This picture was executed in water color about the year 1806 or 1807, by **Louis Miller**, a local amateur artist of York, Pa. **Miller's** chief work was the execution of a portfolio of celebrities and buildings of York. **Mr. Miller**, when an old man, was cared for by the **Small** family, of York, and at his death the portfolio came into their possession, and a later generation presented it to the York County Historical Society. There the author of this volume discovered the picture of **Albright** and had it photographed.

"The pictures painted by **Miller** are held to be good, and have been made use of in the various histories of York, especially by the author of the 'Spangler Annals.'

"In the picture of **Albright** there seems to be a defect in the contour of the mouth, produced by the running of color, which gives it undue length of 'cut.' The eyes, too, seem blurred. Hence an entirely new picture has been drawn by a noted artist, taking the **Miller** picture as a basis, and the picture herewith printed is the result." (See Frontispiece.)

Sketch of Rev. A. Stapleton, M. S., A. M., D. D., Author of this Book.

BY REV. A. D. GRAMLEY, B. D.

DR. AMMON STAPLETON was born at Oley, Berks County, Pennsylvania, January 15, 1850. In his early days his parents moved to Union County where he spent the greater part of his youth at Lewisburg and New Berlin, Pa. He was converted in the first church of the Evangelical Association while a student at Union Seminary at New Berlin, Pa., in 1871. He was licensed to preach the gospel by the Central Pa. Conference at York, Pa., Bishop J. J. Esher, chairman, and I. M. Pines, secretary. He was ordained deacon at New Berlin, 1875, Bishop J. J. Esher presiding. He received his Elder's orders from the hands of Bishop R. Yeakel at Williamsport in 1877.

At the age of fourteen he enlisted in the Union Army and served in the Civil War from 1864 to its close, having witnessed the great battle of Gettysburg. He received his fundamental training in the public schools of his county and at Union Seminary. He continued his studies all through his busy ministerial life. In early manhood he began to specialize in particular branches of learning. He first turned his attention to Biology and Geology and acquired quite a large and valuable collection of fossils and minerals. These are now an appreciated asset to the Albright College Museum. Later he turned his attention to history and became quite an investigator and genealogist. He was encyclopedic in his knowledge of historical data. He was naturally inclined to stir smouldering embers into lambent flames and swing a torch, not so easily to be extinguished, into every nook and corner of early Evangelical history.

As a historian he had no peer in the Church and his literary genius found fruitage in such works as "Evangelical Annals," "Flashlights of Evangelical History," "Life and Times of Jacob Albright," "Memorial of the Huguenots," "Heroines of the Revolution," "Natural History of the Bible," and "The Marvelous Story of Selin, the Algerine Castaway."

Dr. Stapleton was one of the best informed men in the United Evangelical Church, and outside of his denomination he was recognized as a scholar and writer. Central Pennsylvania College conferred upon him the degree of M.S. and A.M. in 1888 and 1896 respectively. About ten years ago Ursinus College, an institution of the Reformed Church, conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity as a mark of respect to his ability.

He served with acceptability a number of important appointments in the Central Pa. Conference. He served eight years as presiding elder, and seven years as secretary of his conference, and represented his conference a number of times at the General Conference as an influential delegate.

His sudden death on the night of September 17-18, 1916, was a shock to a host of interested friends. He was pastor of St. Paul's United Evangelical Church, Williamsport, Pa., at the time of his departure. One needs but look over the official roster to note his prominence. He was president of the Educational Aid, Bible Conference Society, Deaconess Board of his Conference, and trustee of Albright College, and the Evangelical Home, a life member of the German Historical Society and the corresponding secretary of the Evangelical Historical Society as well as president of the Joint Centennial Committee which had in charge the programmatical arrangements for the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of the building of the first Evangelical church, and he, more than any other person, contributed to the historic interest and success of the celebration.

In disposition he was approachable, in geniality balmy, in demeanor courteous, in debate fair, in argumentation astute, in diplomacy judicious, in discrimination sagacious, in committee meetings thoughtful, in conference commanding, in study diligent, in labors unwearied, in recital fascinating, in disputation acute, in description graphic, in portrayal vivid, in speech fluent, and in address oratorical.

"Servant of God, well done;
Rest from thy loved employ;
The battle fought, the victory won.
Enter thy Master's joy."

CHAPTER I.

The Pennsylvania Germans.

Albright one of the "Pennsylvania Germans"—His work confined to them —Who they were—Causes of their emigration—The Thirty Years' War —Devastation of the Palatinate—Religious persecution of the Pietists— A "Joshua" appears—Migration to New York—Deflected to Pennsylvania—Large bodies of exiles—Large number of the immigrants— First ministers exiles—Great scarcity of ministers—Muhlenberg and Schlatter organize the Lutheran and Reformed Synods—Great religious declension—Leaven of Pietism remains.

REV. JACOB ALBRIGHT was born, reared, and educated a German, preached in the German language, and for more than a quarter of a century had no English preacher in the denomination he founded.[1] His followers also were Germans, and evangelistic work among the English was discouraged, for reasons which will appear later. These Germans, however, were not European, but so-called "Pennsylvania Germans," whose forefathers had fled from the European Fatherland on account of war, religious persecution, and civil oppression. Instead of "High" German, they spoke the soft and beautiful dialect of the Palatinate or Rhine provinces, from whence their fathers had come. Since the founder of "The Evangelical Association of North America," as well as his immediate coworker confined their evangelistic labors to the Pennsylvania Germans, a brief account of their origin will enable the reader to have a more comprehensive understanding of the Life and Times of Albright as presented in this volume, for the work they inaugurated in its distinctive mission retained its original features over half a century.[2]

1 James Hamilton was the first English preacher granted license, in 1825. Rev. John Conrad Reisner was the first European German licensed, in 1822.
2 General Conference of 1843. See "Evangelical Annals," p. 269.

The emigration of tens of thousands of Germans to **William Penn's** English province, within a period of a few decades, and the causes that led thereto, have in recent years been fruitful subjects of historical investigation. This emigration at a certain stage assumed the proportions of an exodus when, in the winter of 1709-10, over thirty thousand people were precipitated upon the shores of England within a few months, most of whom had fled from the Rhine provinces, penniless and destitute.[3] The British authorities were taxed to their utmost to care for this mass of humanity. Great camps were constructed for them by the government on the outskirts of London, and active preparations were made to transport them to various colonies of the British realm.

After the initial wave had spent itself the migration continued in a steady stream, mostly by way of Rotterdam, direct to Philadelphia, until the outbreak of the French and Indian War in 1755. While the great mass of them remained in Pennsylvania, large numbers also went to Western Maryland, the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, and southward as far as the forks of the Yadkin in North Carolina. Already in the Colonial period they constituted the majority of the inhabitants of the counties of Berks, Lancaster, York, and Lehigh, in Pennsylvania. In many sections of the Province the German language was almost exclusively used in the home, school, church, and place of business, and to a certain extent even in the courts of justice. Many wills and other documents of the old Germans were written and also recorded in that language. An estimate may be formed of the large number of Germans who found a congenial asylum here from the following facts: In 1727 the number in the Province was given at twenty thousand. In that year the authorities became alarmed because of the great number coming, and prescribed an oath of allegiance which was administered to all male adults upon arrival. From this date the lists were preserved and the arrivals are known, numbering twenty-four thousand from 1727 to 1749, and nearly thirty-two thousand from that date to the outbreak of the French and Indian War which stopped the

3 For full account of this German Exodus, see publications of "The Pennsylvania German Society," Vols. V to X.

influx. From the close of that war and the outbreak of the Revolution some ten thousand more immigrants arrived, and if to all this multitude we add the natural increase of the earlier arrivals, the reader can form a good idea of "the German Nation" in Pennsylvania. The causes which led to this great immigration were many, each sufficiently distressing in itself to have led to it. Narrowed down, however, we find the chief causes to have been the desolation of war and civil and religious persecution.

The soil of the Palatinate drank more human blood in modern times than any other section of equal size on earth. For several centuries the Rhine Valley was the battle ground of Europe. It was the chief theatre of the "Thirty Years' War" (1618-1648), which was the great struggle between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, involving nearly all the powers of Europe, and terminated by the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. By this treaty the Catholic powers were forced to concede the rights of the Protestant religion.

The price paid by the Protestants for the free exercise of religion was the most stupendous ever paid by mankind. The appalling loss of Germany alone, as the result of this war and the horrible famines that followed, may be estimated from the fact that the population was reduced from seventeen millions to four millions of souls.[4] All the large cities of the Palatinate were repeatedly taken by storm by one or the other of the contestants, and several cities were burned to the ground.

That the reader may have an idea of the appalling calamity that befell our Palatine forefathers we will have a contemporary account of what was suffered by Phillipsburgh, which is only one of many similar tragic experiences.[5] "The city of Phillipsburgh, reckoned the first in the Palatinate, has been taken six times, namely, in 1633 by the Imperialists; the year after by the Swedes; and in 1636 again by the Imperialists; in 1644 by the **Duke d' Enghien,** afterwards **Prince of Conde;** by the Germans in 1676, and by the Dauphine on his birthday, the first of November, 1688, but was restored to the Empire by the Treaty of Ryswick

4 Vide "History of the Reformed Church in Germany," by Dr. J. Good, p. 127.

5 Preface to the Heidelberg Catechism, 1709.

in 1697." The Treaty of Westphalia (1648), which closed "The Thirty Years' War," was hardly more than a truce. After the withdrawal of the contending armies the sovereigns of the Palatine states, by remitting the taxes for several years and otherwise encouraging the people, induced them to rebuild anew the waste places of the Fatherland.

Their respite from the horrors of war, however, was very brief. In 1685, **Louis XIV** of France, instigated by his bigoted Catholic advisors, revoked "the Edict of Nantes" by which **Henry IV,** in 1598, had granted religious freedom to his Protestant (Huguenot) subjects. This cruel act of the king is the darkest blot in the history of France and evoked a protest from nearly every Protestant country of Europe. Confiscation of property, banishment, and even death, was the penalty for continuing in the Protestant faith in France. For the history of the dire persecutions that befell the French Huguenots the reader must look elsewhere; suffice it to say that about half a million of the best people of France managed to escape into the adjoining countries. The Palatinate adjoining France soon swarmed with the French Protestant refugees who were accorded a warm welcome by their co-religionists. The French sovereign was stung to the quick by the attitude of the Protestant countries because of his Revocation; and he soon found a pretext to punish those nearest his dominions in consequence. In a short time he sent a powerful army, under the notorious **General Melac,** into the Rhine Valley with orders to devastate the country. All writers agree that **Melac** faithfully carried out his instructions. The city of Heidelberg, the seat of the great Reformed university, and the place where the noted Heidelberg Catechism was written, in 1563, suffered terribly. In 1688 it was taken by storm and sacked, and again in 1693, when fifteen thousand of its citizens were put to the sword. Twelve hundred cities and towns were destroyed, as also the buildings and vineyards in the country. The woes of the people, which beggar all description, aroused the deepest sympathy in the entire Protestant world. Swift and terrible retribution was meted out to the cruel and arrogant **Louis** for his many misdeeds when the armies of England,

under the great **Duke of Marlborough,** crushed the power of France on the bloody field of Blenheim, Aug. 13, 1704.

In 1697 was concluded the "Peace of Ryswick," by which the Catholic, Lutheran, and Reformed faiths were put on an equal plane; but the Catholics soon found many excuses for ignoring its sacred provisions. In 1701 the War of the Spanish Succession broke out, which lasted twelve years, and the contending armies again made the Palatinate their battle ground. In 1707 **General Villers** at the head of a French army invaded the Palatinate, and the atrocities of former years were repeated. In the preface of the Heidelberg Catechism, printed in London, in 1709, for the Reformed refugees, of which we have already made mention, it is said: "**Villers** *and his army reduced the Palatinate to a perfect wilderness, not leaving the poor Reformed so much as a house in which to hide their heads, or hardly enough clothing to cover their nakedness.*" The French, regardless of the treaty of Ryswick, sent many Jesuit priests into the Palatinate to reclaim the people to the Catholic faith. Protestant schools were suppressed and the country was flooded with their literature.[6] Well may our hearts bleed for the woes of our Palatine forefathers, even at this late day.

From these scenes of ruin and desolation let us turn our eyes to the dawning light of a brighter day. A Joshua appeared who, like his name-sake of old, led his people into "the Promised Land." A humble Lutheran pastor of the city of Lindau, in Bavaria, was singled out by Providence to take the lead of the Palatines in their quest for deliverance from the horrors of war and oppression. This man was **Rev. Joshua Kocherthal.**

In 1704 **Kocherthal** visited England in behalf of his afflicted countrymen. The results of his visit were most gratifying, as he was given assurance of help in official quarters, if it could be given without disturbing political relations. The conclusions reached were that emigration was the only solution of the prob-

6 The Protestants, in order to counteract the teachings of the Jesuits, printed and secretly circulated an anti-Catholic catechism which was printed in 1702, but the author and place of printing are not given for obvious reasons. The writer has probably the only copy of this remarkable little book in America.

lem. Once under the protection of England, they would be safe from their oppressors.

In 1706 **Kocherthal** published a small pamphlet in which he gave his plans relating to emigration. This book was extensively circulated among the people and had much to do with the "exodus" in 1709. Then, too, **William Penn,** the Founder of Pennsylvania, had visited Germany in 1676, in the interests of the oppressed Mennonites and others, and the removal of the Crefeld Mennonites and some Huguenots to his new Colony, in 1683, gave the movement a strong impetus.

In 1708 **Kocherthal** set out from Lindau with the vanguard of what eventually became a mighty army. His party, mostly members of his congregation, consisted of twenty-one families, in all numbering fifty-four souls. Proceeding down the Rhine and crossing over into England they, in a touching address to **Queen Ann,** described their great misfortunes and threw themselves on the bounty of the gracious Queen.[7] This was the beginning of the Palatine emigration to England and America and was quite distinct from the Mennonite movement which had begun in 1683 with the founding of Germantown.

Assisted by the English, **Kocherthal** and his colony set sail for New York on April 11, 1708, where they were given a large grant of land on the Hudson. The following year he returned to England where, from the many thousands of his countrymen who had during his absence arrived, he organized, under the auspices of the Government, the greatest colony that ever left the shores of Europe. On January 20, 1710, the convoy of ten vessels, having on board about four thousand souls, set out under **Kocherthal** for New York. Dire misfortunes followed them. Besides almost incessant storms, their stores gave out because of the long voyage and various diseases broke out among them. After having been on the ocean six months and losing a number of their vessels and a third of their number by death, they at last reached their destination and were placed on the lands assigned them.

The colonists, however, were not accorded fair treatment by

7 Rev. Joshua Kocherthal died on the Hudson River, in New York, in 1719. For his petition to Queen Ann, see "Documentary History of New York," Vol. V, p. 44.

the New York authorities and they were soon greatly dissatisfied and great numbers moved to the Mohawk Valley upon lands given them by the Indians. Even there the Colonial government gave them no rest but sought to compel them to pay for their land which the friendly Indians had donated them. As an immediate result of this injustice, a large party, in 1723, guided by their Indian friends, crossed the unbroken forest to the headwaters of the North Branch, where they constructed rafts on which they placed their families and goods and proceeded down the stream to the mouth of the Swatara, at (now) Middletown, on the Susquehanna River, in Pennsylvania. Proceeding up that stream they located in a most beautiful and fertile region named by the Indians Tulpehocken. In 1728 they were followed by a still larger party led by the noted Indian interpreter, **Conrad Weiser.** Within a few years most of the **Kocherthal** colonists had removed from New York to Pennsylvania, where they were well treated and confirmed in their titles to land. The news of this transplanting and the betterment of their condition soon reached Germany and had the effect to change the current of emigration to Pennsylvania.

In this connection we may mention other German colonists who came to this Province at an early day and in course of time were absorbed by the great mass of Palatines and became part of the "Pennsylvania German" nation.

In 1683 arrived the first colony of Crefeld Mennonites, led by the noted **Dr. Francis Daniel Pastorius**, and founded Germantown, near Philadelphia. In 1709 began the influx of Swiss and Alsatian Mennonites, who were assigned ten thousand acres of land by **William Penn** in Lancaster county. In 1719 the first contingent of the exiled Dunkards arrived and located at Germantown. These were followed in 1729 by the founder of the sect, **Alexander Mack**, accompanied by the remnant of his followers consisting of thirty families.[8] In 1734 arrived the remnants of the exiled Schwenkfelders, who located in eastern

8 Alex. Mack, founder of the Dunkard Church, was born 1679; organized his first society in 1708; died in Germantown in 1735. For list of his colony, see Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. XVII, p. 18 (Second Series).

Pennsylvania.[9] In 1742-3, large bodies of Moravians arrived, as also their patron, **Count Zinzendorf,** and founded Bethlehem and Nazareth.[10] Such in brief is the history of the "Pennsylvania Germans,"[11] the people with which the matter of this book is vitally related. We will now briefly survey their religious condition.

During the first few decades the Germans had but few pastors among them, and such as they had were of the Pietistic type and were themselves exiles. The first among the Lutherans were the brothers **Daniel** and **Justus Falckner,** who belonged to the Erfurt Pietistic group suppressed by the authorities, as elsewhere noted. We may here note, however, that the Swedes, who were Lutherans, had churches on the Delaware long before the arrival of **Penn.** The **Falckners** did not remain long in the Province, but took up their work in New Jersey and New York.

In 1717 arrived **Rev. Anthony Jacob Henkel,** a Pietistic minister and court preacher to one of the lesser German sovereigns. For rebuking the excesses of the court he was dismissed by his sovereign and forbidden to remain in the realm. Although well along in life, he came to Pennsylvania with a large family and located in (now) New Hanover. For a while he was the only active Lutheran preacher in the Province and organized some of the oldest congregations, among them the Tulpehocken (1723), among the Palatines and in Germantown. After ten years of unremitting labor he met death suddenly by falling off his horse, August 12, 1728.[12]

The Reformed immigrants were no better supplied with ministers. There was no Reformed minister in the Province until 1710, when **Rev. Samuel Gulden** arrived from Switzerland. He had been the pastor of several churches near Bern, and being a Pietist, he encouraged conventicles (prayer meetings) and

9 Adherents of Count Casper von Schwenkfeld of Silesia, born 1490; died 1561. For list of Schwenkfeld colony, see Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. XVII, supra.

10 Count Zinzendorf, born 1700; died 1761. For list of Moravians, see "Rupp's Thirty Thousand Names."

11 For a full history of "The Pennsylvania Germans," see the splendid publications of their Historical Society.

12 The author descends from this exile; Vide "The Henkel Memorial."

"prayer circles." A revival broke out on his charge and he was suspended for conducting such "disorders." Several other Pietistic co-laborers were suspended at the same time. These facts sharply emphasize our statements in another connection regarding "High" and "Low" church life of the Protestant faith. **Gulden** was not very active in a ministerial capacity in Pennsylvania. For many years the Reformed people had only a few lay evangelists to minister to their spiritual needs.

When **Rev. Henry Melchior Muhlenberg**[13] was sent to Pennsylvania to organize the Lutheran Church, in 1742, there were only a few active ministers of that faith in the Province. When he organized the Lutheran Synod, in 1748, there were only eleven regular Lutheran pastors in America.

Rev. Michael Schlatter was sent from Switzerland, in 1746, to organize the Reformed Church, and when, a year later, he organized the Coetus or Synod, there were present thirty-one delegates, of whom only four were ministers of the Gospel.

In addition to what has been said, the appalling dearth of German ministers in the Province will further appear in the following statement: In 1759, **Dr. William White,** Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, made a religious census of the Province for the use of the Primate of the Church of England. In his report he says the Lutheran membership is about thirty-five thousand, and that of the Reformed about thirty thousand. This does not include the thousands of Germans in the South. One of the greatest evils of the times was the fact that a number of immoral and irresponsible ministers, who had left the Fatherland under a cloud, imposed themselves on congregations, as wolves in sheep's clothing. They held aloof from Synodical organizations and therefore could not be disciplined for drunkenness and other immoralities. The "Church," nevertheless, had to bear the blame. Is it any wonder that the poor Germans sank into the darkness of a spiritual night from which nothing but the mighty power of a Divine visitation could rescue them?

Notwithstanding this sad spiritual declension, a mighty, holy

13 H. M. Muhlenberg was born 1711, died 1787. He was sent to America by the Church authorities of Halle.

leaven was still working toward a reformation. The spirit of the old Pietists was not dead, but gaining new ground under the leadership of holy and consecrated men. The prayers and tears of our exiled forefathers, who "suffered the loss of all things" for Christ, were honored of God in the great spiritual uplifting of their posterity in America. To this brighter chapter we now direct out attention, and note the unfoldings of Divine Providence—blessed harbingers of better days, the realization of hopes long deferred.

ALBRIGHT'S FARM.

CHAPTER II.

Early Life of Albright.

Birth of Albright—A patriot—Marriage and removal to Lancaster County —His great bereavement—Rev. Anthony Houtz—His conversion—Becomes a Methodist—Exhorter—Evangelist—His status as a minister—His personal characteristics—Eloquent, Methodical—Apostolic zeal—His care for the brethren.

THE Rev. **Jacob Albright**, founder of the Evangelical Association, was born in Douglass Township, Berks County, Pa., May 1, 1759. He was the son of **John Albright,** born in the Palatinate, Germany. The family adhered to the Lutheran faith and were members of the church at New Hanover, but some time prior to the Revolution became members of the church at Pottstown. The family records are to be found in both these churches. At the time their son **Jacob** was born, the parents lived on a small farm on Fox Hill, a few miles north of Pottstown, where the son spent his boyhood days.

The early years of **Jacob Albright** were uneventful, and we know nothing of interest concerning him until the dark days of the Revolution, when he was growing into manhood. As his parental home was within easy hearing of the battle sound of Brandywine and Germantown, in his own native state, we may well imagine how this young heart was stirred within him. Within sight of the rocky hill on which he was reared occurred the movements of the smitten and bleeding Continental Army under **Washington.** The church of his fathers at New Hanover[1] was converted into a hospital for the wounded of Brandywine and Paoli. Within a few hours' ride from his home was Valley Forge with its scenes of sufferings and sad memories.

With such stirring events occurring all around him, the youth-

1 This church, erected in 1767, is still standing in good condition (1916). It is built of stone and is a large, magnificent structure.

ful **Albright** could not be expected to be passive. Hence we find him enrolled as the drummer of **Captain John Witz's** company of Berks County militia.[2] This company was composed mostly of young men from Pottstown and vicinity. The part taken by the Pennsylvania militia was most honorable. They participated in the battles of Brandywine and Germantown, and although they were only supposed to do duty in defense of the state, several of the Berks County battalions of militia participated in the New Jersey campaign. Toward the close of the war we find **Albright** in a detachment under **Sergeant Eisenbiss,** detailed to guard British prisoners of war at Reading.

In the year 1785 **Albright** was married to **Catharine Cope,** who came from an old and highly respectable family in Chester County, with whom he had six children, three of whom died in infancy. His occupation was that of a tile maker, which was then a good business, as the use of tiles for roofing was then quite common. A few years after his marriage he removed to Earl Township, Lancaster County, where he had purchased a small farm on which was a good deposit of lime and clay. Here he applied himself industriously to develop the resources of his property, producing bricks, lime, and tiles, besides tilling his land. He had ready sale for his products and became quite prosperous, so that at his death his estate was valued at four thousand dollars, which was a respectable competence at that day.

The community in which **Albright** now lived was far better, in many respects, than his old home. The Reformed evangelists, **Otterbein, Houtz,** and others, as also the Methodists, had penetrated this region long before his settlement there. A Methodist class had been formed in his immediate neighborhood. The United Brethren had likewise gained a following there. Two individuals of this community call for special mention in this connection—**Isaac Davis,** a lay preacher of the Methodist Church, whose farm adjoined that of **Albright,** and **Adam Riegel,** a lay minister of the United Brethren, who also lived in this vicinity. We shall meet these good men again in our story.

Soon after 1790 occurred an event of far-reaching importance

2 See Pennsylvania Archives (Fifth Series), Vol. II, p. 292; also "Perkiomen Region, Past and Present," Vol. III, p. 68.

in the life of **Albright.** During an epidemic of dysentery several of his children died, and this affliction marked a turning point in his life. He was greatly distressed at the loss of his children, but in the providence of God what seemed at first a great personal calamity eventuated in a great blessing to himself and indirectly in the founding of an evangelistic agency that has been the means of salvation to many thousands of souls. The circumstances that proved to be the turning point of **Albright's** life are as follows:

A few years previous to this event the Reformed Synod had ordained to the ministry a godly young man named **Anthony Houtz,** who in 1787 had charge of several churches in Dauphin County, one of which was at Harrisburg, Pa., then a mere village. A few years later he removed to that place and was the first resident pastor in the future capital of Pennsylvania. **Houtz** was a very spiritual man and of the evangelistic type. We find him often associated with the evangelists of that period. **Bishop Newcomer,** of the United Brethren Church, frequently mentions him in his journal. At the time of **Albright's** affliction **Houtz** was on an evangelistic tour in that neighborhood and was engaged by **Albright** to conduct the funeral services for his children.

Strange are the ways of Providence! God had a great work for **Albright** to do. To prepare him for his mission He first humbled him by bereavement, and made him to see his own miserable spiritual condition. Then, by the same Divine power, the right man was sent with the right message for the afflicted man.[3] It was through the preaching of **Houtz** that **Albright** discovered the fallacy of his hope of salvation. Hitherto his dependence had been on the outward observance of the ordinances of the Church, and his worthiness as a good Church member.[4] Through the preaching of **Houtz** he was led to see that Jesus alone is the source of our salvation, and a personal knowledge of Him and a constant abiding in Him the only source of a true

3 See Dreisbach's reply to Prof. H. G. Spayth, in "Evangelical Messenger," 1855.

4 By a personal examination of the "Berg Strass" Lutheran church record, the author found that Albright and wife were communicant members of that church as late as the spring of 1791.

Christian experience and assurance of salvation. (John 15:1-11.) This discovery led him into a still deeper sorrow, but it was that "godly sorrow that needeth not be repented of" (2 Cor. 7:10). He accordingly determined to leave the realm of "dead works" and seek "the kingdom of God (which) is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17).[5] Long and earnest was his struggle to gain the light of saving truth. His spiritual neighbors, **Davis** and **Riegel**, now came to his assistance. The latter especially was helpful to him, and it was at a meeting in **Riegel's** house that **Albright** gained a clear assurance of the Divine favor.

Because of the spiritual deadness of the old German churches of that day, it was out of the question for **Albright** to remain within the communion of his fathers. He now lived in the conscious experience of a new and spiritual life, and the services of the dead and formal churches did not afford him the soul-nourishment for which he longed. Although the religious services of the Methodists were almost entirely in the English language, and **Albright** was German, yet he found their mode of worship sufficiently congenial to cast his lot among them and unite with the class of which his friend and neighbor, **Isaac Davis**,[6] was the leader.

5 Rev. Anthony Houtz, the spiritual father of Albright, was born in Germany in 1758, ordained to the Reformed ministry in 1787, and died at Groton, Tompkins County, New York, in 1830. He was one of that noble band of Reformed ministers who, instead of leaving the Church of his fathers, carried on his evangelistic mission despite the opposition of the formalistic element of his denomination. In view of the far-reaching influence of the little group of Pietistic ministers within her fold in the early day, the Reformed Church may well claim a good share of the evangelistic influence that refreshed the spiritual life of the Church in general a century or more ago.

6 Rev. Isaac Davis was born in 1754, and came from an old Welsh family that came to Pennsylvania in the days of Penn. Davis was closely associated with Albright in his evangelistic work, and was an attendant at their "General" meetings. Davis later removed to the vicinity of Sunbury, where he died in 1843. He had a family that became "Evangelical." His son David, born 1803, died 1876, had four sons who were Evangelical ministers, all licensed by the Central Pa. Conference of the Evangelical Association.

The events we are now recording occurred in 1791, during a period of great religious interest in that community. The revival spirit broke out also among the Mennonites, of whom there were many in that locality, and a number of their converts soon became evangelists, and later were active in the United Brethren work. Of this number were **Abraham** and **Christian Hershey** and **Christopher Grosh.** Thus we see the revival fires kindled among the Germans in **Albright's** locality, and while he shared in the same spirit he evidently did not approve of the form the work was assuming, as we shall see in another connection. Methodism was evidently in keeping with **Albright's** habits as well as his spiritual ideals, because he was naturally methodical. He evidently improved his talents to the fullest extent of his opportunities, for soon after his connection with the Methodist class he was made an exhorter, which was then a stepping stone to that of local preacher. In the United Brethren movement the office of exhorter was sub-ministerial.

We have noted that some of **Albright's** neighbors, **Davis, Riegel, Grosh** and the **Hershey** brothers, were local preachers. Even then they made frequent tours from home in evangelistic service. Why should not he? The great mass of his German countrymen lay in a state of spiritual darkness. Why should not *he* devote his life for their uplift? Thus we see how his environment as well as his temperament worked toward bringing about his great life purpose, namely, to be herald of the Cross to his benighted countrymen.

Albright as a Minister of the Gospel.—As the founder of a distinct ecclesiastical body, the manner in which **Jacob Albright** was led into the field of independent evangelism forms an interesting chapter of Christian experience. Like many other leaders of great religious movements, his work was the result of a tremendous burden for souls. To him was given the choice between the sorrow of the rejection of the call, or the joy of the Divine favor in its acceptance. (1 Cor. 9:16.) In his brief autobiography, preserved by his co-laborer, **Geo. Miller,**[7] he relates both the manner of his call and also its specific character, namely, to preach experimental religion to his neglected fellow Germans.

7 "Albrecht und Miller," p. 16.

It is really on the special character of his mission that his independent organization was founded, and in its necessity lies the apology (if any were needed) for the separate existence of his work. It was only after many months of sore and distressing travail of soul, so intense that it made him a physical wreck, that he saw the leadings of God's hand in the matter and yielded to the call.

Relating his experiences, **Albright** says: "I was pervaded with a burning love toward God and His children and all mankind. It was this love which the grace of God shed in my heart that led me to see the great decline of experimental religion among the German nation in America. I felt for them. I saw in them my brethren and sincerely wished them the happiness that was mine. With such feelings I often fell upon my knees and with burning tears besought God that He would lead my German brethren into the way of truth, and that they might have pure and exemplary teachers, who would preach the gospel in its power, that the dead and sleeping professors of religion might be aroused from their sleep of sin and brought to a true life of godliness, so that they might be also partakers of the blessed peace with God and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost. In this manner I continued my supplication daily for the welfare of my brethren. As I thus held intercourse with God it suddenly became light within my soul. I heard a voice say within me: *'Was it by mere chance that the miserable condition of your erring brethren pressed so heavily on your heart? Was it only a coincidence that your heart was overburdened with sympathy for your brethren? Is not this the visible hand of Him who guides not only the destinies of nations but also that of the individual? How if His unending love, which seeks to lead every soul into Abraham's bosom, has chosen you to lead your brethren into the path of knowledge and prepare them to be partakers of God's mercy?'*

"In my soul it became brighter and brighter, and I realized in holy confidence that my prayers were heard. I also heard the command of God: 'Go out and work in My vineyard. Proclaim to My children the Gospel in its primitive purity, with emphasis and power, and confide in my paternal love that all who hear and believe shall be partakers of my grace.' "

Instead of at once obeying this clear and unmistakable call, **Albright** permitted himself to be overcome by a temporizing spirit. His want of ministerial equipment brought him betimes to the verge of despair. This mighty struggle, in which his soul swung like a pendulum between hope and fear, light and darkness, joy and sorrow, grew in intensity from day to day and soon made sad inroads on his health. He was seized with a constant and burning pain that affected his entire nervous system. His body became so weakened that he could no longer do manual labor. What he experienced while in this condition, he says, was indescribable. There were times when he imagined himself utterly forsaken of God, at which times he cried out in terrible agony and despair. Eventually he was led to see that his deplorable condition was wholly the result of his resistance to the Divine call, and that the path to health lay in the direction of a complete surrender to the will of God. Measuring the future by the past, he knew full well that God's stern displeasure was the penalty of his disobedience; while an inward peace and God's constant blessing would be the reward of obedience. He now betook himself anew to God in prayer, imploring forgiveness for his presumptuous disobedience, and solemly vowed that if it pleased God to again restore him to health of soul and body he would immediately comply with His will and give himself wholly and unreservedly to the work of the Gospel ministry.

Scarcely had he made this resolution, when the awful gloom that had settled upon his soul was changed to sunshine. The heavy burden rolled from his spirit and "the peace of God that passeth all understanding," again flooded his soul. With tranquility of mind and soul restored, came also gradually the improvement of his bodily health. Upon this he at once arranged his temporal affairs with a view of prolonged absence from home, because of his prospective tours as an evangelist.

It is impossible to say in what year these great struggles in the experience of **Albright** took place, but they probably occurred in 1795. As elsewhere related, **Albright** soon after his conversion united with the Methodist Episcopal Church and was soon afterwards given exhorter's license, which was his authority to exercise his gifts as a lay minister. The period of this relationship

with the Methodist Episcopal Church was in 1795, during which time he developed the evangelistic spirit, and, as said, probably marks the period of his great spiritual conflict. It is a matter of record that he entered the evangelistic field in the month of October, 1796. From this date we find no further connection between him and the Church mentioned, for the reason that his activities were given to the Germans exclusively, a field into which the Methodists had not yet extensively entered.

It seems proper in this connection to discuss the distinctive mission of **Albright.** From what we have already given it is manifest that his call to preach experimental religion to the neglected Germans came to him as a clear and well-defined revelation to his soul. This fact not only controlled his own labors, but also dominated the polity of his following until the General Conference of 1843. It is because of the *distinctiveness* of this call that the followers of **Albright** justified their existence as a separate ecclesiastical organization.[8] It is a matter of record that **Bishop Francis Asbury,** then the head of the Methodist Episcopal Church, did not then favor a separate branch of evangelistic work for the Germans, and in 1810 rejected a proposition by **Rev. John Dreisbach** that the Evangelicals should continue their distinctive work among the Germans as an integral part of the Methodist body, by declaring the plan "impractical."[9] **Asbury,** while shaping the polity of his Church along non-nativistic lines (a course which his Church reversed soon after his death), nevertheless saw its necessity earlier in life. In his Journal of 1758, he records a meeting with **Rev. William Otterbein,** the founder of the United Brethren Church, for the planning of a scheme to evangelize the Germans.[10] This was before the organization of the United Brethren conference. In the light of later developments we are not sure that the bishop regarded that work with any greater favor than that of **Albright.** In fact the futile at-

8 See "Evangelical Annals," p. 170.

9 Ibid, p. 171.

10 "Sunday, June 5th, I called on Mr. Otterbein. We had some free conversation on the necessity of forming a church among the Dutch (Germans), holding conferences, the order of its government," etc. Asbury's Journal, p. 398.

tempts of **Bishop Newcomer** to connect the United Brethren movement with that of the Methodists, confirms this view.[11]

The status of **Albright** as an evangelist may next claim our attention. The office of an evangelist has from time immemorial been considered as only a function of the ministerial office. In other words, all ministers are supposed to exercise the office of evangelist, but not all evangelists are supposed to exercise the full office of a minister. There are various kinds of evangelists. Some are *singing* evangelists like **Ira D. Sankey, P. P. Bliss** and many others. Some are *praying* evangelists, while others, like **D. L. Moody,** preach the Word. Very many of the most useful and effective workers in the evangelistic field do not assume the full functions of the ministerial office.

In the light of these well known facts **Albright's** entrance into the field of evangelism becomes plain. We have already noted that he was granted license as an exhorter, which at that time practically constituted him a lay preacher. There was little difference, (if any), at that time between the exhorter and the local preacher. Among the United Brethren the office of exhorter was from the beginning the same as that known later as local preacher, and the licenses of exhorters were given by the annual instead of the quarterly conferences, as in the Methodist connection.[12]

It seems clear that when **Albright** started out on his evangelistic tours he did not transcend the functions authorized by the Methodist quarterly conference, and doubtless labored in harmony with the same until the enlargement of his work called for the fuller exercise of the ministerial office, such as the administration of baptism and the Lord's Supper. We have no evidence that he exercised the full functions of the ministry until his ordination on November 5, 1803, after which he exercised all ministerial functions freely.[13]

11 Vide "Newcomer's Journal," 1809.

12 Vide "Berger's History of the United Brethren Church," conference proceedings of 1802, p. 170, "Resolved to give Valentine Huegel license to exhort;" "Brother Miller obtained license from the conference to exhort." At the conference of 1813, four persons were licensed "to exhort," p. 128.

13 In November, 1803, he baptized Michael, son of Abraham Ream, of Centre County, Pa., who became the ancestor of an honored Evangelical

We have but few literary remains of **Albright** from which to form an intelligent opinion as to his preaching abilities. But from the brief sketch of his life by his co-laborer, **Rev. George Miller,** we are able to get a glimpse of his well-rounded mentality and powers as a public speaker. Then, too, from lips now long sealed in death, we have heard his sermons extolled and his manner described, so as to enable us to make a fair estimate of his character as a minister of the Gospel. He was a most persistent student of the Bible and hence was "mighty in the Scriptures." His sermons were methodical, convincing and conclusive. He was calm and deliberate in his introductions, somewhat argumentative and remonstrant, and never failed to make strong applications of the truth, and often with great eloquence and power. While he lacked the emotional eloquence of his spiritual son, **Rev. John Walter,** he possessed a tenderness of feeling and earnestness of spirit which are of themselves unfailing springs of true eloquence, because they reach the deeper chambers of the soul that lie beyond the range of mere emotion. These elements of his pulpit powers **Albright** himself unwittingly brings to the light when he says[14] "By nature I had no talent for speaking and must confess that in this particular I had less aptitude than any one else that ever rose up to speak. However, when I was impelled by the Spirit of God, when through prayer my soul was brought nearer to my Redeemer, when I burned with a horror for sin, when the righteousness of a through-searching judge stood before my eyes, and at the same time His overwhelming love towards His fallen creatures appeared, I was seized with a holy animation that opened my mouth so that with holy eloquence the message of God's grace streamed from my lips to the conversion of the unsaved and the edification of believers."

The late **John Rank** was wont to relate that in the spring of 1805 he, in company with others, rode a distance of fifteen miles

posterity, among whom is Prof. A. E. Gobble, president of Central Pennsylvania College, and later a member of the Faculty of Albright College. Albright also baptized, in 1803, Mary, the daughter of Benjamin Stroh, of Dauphin County. She married George Gipple, removed to Iowa in 1852, where Gipple and a few others built the first Evangelical church in that state. (Evangelical Annals, p. 319.)

14 "Albrecht und Miller," p. 15.

to hear **Albright** preach in the old Saint Elias church at Mifflinburg, Pa. **Albright** was accompanied by his co-laborers, **Walter** and **Miller**. The church was crowded to its utmost capacity. The sermon by **Albright** was of great power and tenderness, and the people were very deeply affected thereby. There was weeping all through the assembly and a great many fell upon their knees and prayed for salvation.[15] The companions of **Rank** were so wrought upon that they fled from the church. **Rev. George Miller, Albright's** spiritual son and successor, in describing his conversion says that he first heard **Albright** preach in the year 1798 in Schuylkill County. His text was, "Thus saith the Lord: behold I set before you the way of life and the way of death" (Jer. 21:8). The discourse impressed **Miller** so powerfully that he says he would have sunk to the floor had he not held fast to a table beside him. **Miller** also writes about a meeting held on Easter day in 1803, at the home of his brother, **Solomon Miller**, when **Albright** preached with such great power that many fled with fear and trembling from the house. They could not, however, shake off the deep conviction for sin that had seized them, but sought the Lord in the pardon of their sins, while those who remained in the house fell on the floor in deep penitential agony, so that a mighty victory was achieved.[16]

As a minister of the gospel, **Albright** sought to practice in his own life the doctrines he preached. Hence we see consistency to have been one of his many excellent traits. He preached holiness of heart and purity of life, and fearlessly assailed the use of tobacco and strong drinks—twin evils which in his day were seldom made the subject of pulpit utterance. These facts show that he had advanced views of personal religion, and had the courage to denounce all evil regardless of consequences.[17] **Albright's** relations with coworkers were always most cordial, and we know not that he ever had a misunderstanding or disagreement with any of them. On the contrary, he exercised a tender

15 John Rank, Esq., was born 1784, in Lancaster County; died in 1878. The discourse impressed Rank so powerfully that he says he would have fallen to the floor had he not supported himself.

16 "Albrecht und Miller," p. 104.

17 "Chr. Botschafter," 1842, p. 141.

and care-taking paternalism toward them. The following incident is illustrative of his deep solicitude for his colleagues:

Rev. George Miller relates[18] that during the first year of his active ministry (1805), in consequence of ill health he became greatly discouraged and was planning to abandon the work altogether, when **Albright,** who was at a distant point, intuitively surmised that there was something wrong, and without previous notice from **Miller,** suddenly came to see him. After drawing from **Miller** a statement of his troubles, he asked him to accompany him to a nearby grove, where in solitude and seclusion, with no witness but his loving Lord Jesus, he solemnly and tenderly admonished his faltering co-laborer, and then carried him in the arms of prayer to a throne of grace where timely help was obtained. (Heb. 4:16). The immediate effect of **Albright's** visit was that **Miller** was reëstablished in his spiritual life and ministerial calling, and never afterwards faltered. May this pathetic incident strengthen and confirm many who read these lines. "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" (2 Tim. 2:3).

Albright admonished his coworkers to be polite in their intercourse with the people, neat in appearance, and studious in all that pertained to their holy calling. He also advised them to keep journals and write therein their official acts, experiences and observations. This was following the custom of the Moravian ministers of that day, whose records became the property of the Church and now constitute one of the greatest historical treasures of the Moravian Church in America. The records which **Albright** undoubtedly made, as well as those of most of his colaborers, have been irrecoverably lost. Only fragments of **Albright's** and **Miller's** journals are preserved in the latter's brief autobiography.[19] From the extracts we give, the reader may see how valuable the full records would be to us at this time. The journal of **Rev. John Dreisbach,** so far as known to the writer, is the only one preserved entire, covering the period of his active ministry.

18 "Albrecht und Miller," p. 103.
19 "Albrecht und Miller."

In order to promote mutual helpfulness and fidelity in their calling, **Albright** entered into a written covenant with his ministerial brethren, which was periodically renewed. Of this, **Miller** says:[20] "**Albright, Walter** *and I renewed* (*Oct. 27, 1806, Author*) *in a condensed document our covenant and duties, and united with greater earnestness to carry on God's work. Brother* **Albright** *exhorted Brother* **Walter** *and me to go forward bravely and courageously in the work begun, and bring as many sinners to Jesus as possible.*"

20 Ibid, p. 116.

CHAPTER III.

Albright's Work in Relation to Protestant Faith and Evangelism.

Albright's work peculiar—Pietism and Ritualism—High and Low Church —Vagaries of Mysticism—Pietism the Life of Protestantism—Pietistic leaders—Pietism in America—Albright's work an outgrowth.

THE evangelistic work of **Rev. Jacob Albright** is somewhat peculiar, and can only be properly understood when considered in connection with religious conditions and evangelistic movements of his times. His personal history, apart from his spiritual mission, is devoid of unusual interest, but the results of his labors in their worldwide influence have not hitherto received from Church historians the attention that their importance deserves.

For many years it was the custom of the old German writers to denounce **Albright** as a heretic and his followers as misguided fanatics. Ministers publicly warned their congregations against the "Albrights" as a reprobate and dangerous class, and even refused sepulture to their dead in the old God's-acre of their fathers. Even the spiritual and evangelistic labors of the ministers of the old Church bodies (the number of these was small indeed), were decried as fanatical and unchurchly, and the ministers rebuked as irregular. It is not strange, therefore, that the spiritual or Pietistic elements of the old churches gravitated toward separation. Owing to the spiritual deadness of these churches it was difficult for their leaders to read the signs of the times in the spiritual awakenings among them, especially such as occurred under the labors of **Dr. William Otterbein, Anthony Houtz, John G. Pfrimmer, Adam Ettinger,** and **George Adam Gueting,** all members of the Reformed Church. It is a sad fact to contemplate that this Church, so pure in Evangelical doctrine and so steadfast in the faith in Reformation times, her sons the

pioneers of evangelism among the Germans of America, should in the end fail to gather her fruitage because it represented a somewhat different type from that so commonly prevalent.

It was this open antagonism of the old Churches against evangelistic effort that caused these latter elements to crystallize into Separatism. Furthermore, the very result of this opposition was then decried as "Antichrist, or the Spirit of Sect and Schism."[1] In 1850 appeared a book bitterly assailing all evangelistic "sects," written by a minister of the Church which has the strongest claim of patronage to the German evangelistic work in Pennsylvania. In this book the author ungraciously placed "The Albrights" on a level with **Joseph Smith,** the founder of Mormonism.[2]

Had these critics taken the trouble to investigate, they would have found that the "Albrights" in their formative period placed themselves upon a creed of the Reformation; that there was no material doctrinal difference between the "Albright" faith and their own; that the only difference was one of Church polity and a spiritual cultus recognized and practiced by the Church of the critics centuries before the modern evangelists, like **Otterbein** and **Albright,** sought to reëstablish it in its original character, and which is as old as the Christian faith itself. These indubitable facts afford us both the grounds and motive, from an ecclesiastical standpoint, for the independent evangelistic labors of **Albright** as well as other evangelists of his time.

The Protestant Faith: Pietism and Ritualism.—The life and work of **Albright** constitutes a bright and notable chapter in the history of a secondary Reformation in the Protestant Church that has continued as a mighty spiritual leaven to the present time, and has profoundly influenced the Christian Church. It is this great spiritual impetus that has given birth to modern missions, interdenominational work, and coöperative evangelism.

The following panoramic view of the working of the evangelistic forces of which **Albright** and his contemporaries were a constituent part, will enable the reader to understand what otherwise would be unintelligible. The great Reformation of the Fif-

1 Title of a book published by Prof. J. W. Nevin (New York, 1848).

2 "Ein Ernstes Wert uber Secten Geist und Secten Wesen." Title of book by Rev. J. W. Reber, Chambersburg, Pa., 1850.

teenth Century, under **Luther, Calvin, Zwingli** and others, had for its primary object the rescue of Christian doctrine from Popish error by which the truth of God was subverted. This was necessary for the attainment of the purpose for which the gospel was given, namely, the salvation of men. The application of Christian doctrine in the life and experience of the believer was, however, not then as clearly understood as in later times. The Reformers were exceedingly biased in their doctrinal views. It was very difficult for any of them to understand the differences between the essentials and the unessentials in the matter of personal salvation. Even Protestants passed the ban of imprisonment, banishment and even death upon dissenters. We need only recall the dreadful persecutions of the Mennonites on the Continent, the Non-Conformists in England, and imprisonment, banishment, and even hanging of Quakers, Baptists and others in New England. In holding that "only one creed can be right," our forefathers failed to remember that creeds are made by men and need to be revised as men gain larger visions of truth.

However, amid all the turmoils incident to an adjustment of Christian doctrine and practice, there always existed two distinct elements in the Protestant Church, which may be denominated as the "High" and the "Low" church parties. The difference between them relates rather to spirit and method in church life, than to doctrine. A "high" churchman lays stress on creed, ordinances, ceremonies, and authority. A "low" churchman, while not disregarding these, holds that the emphasis must be laid on the *spiritual life and experience,* rather than outward forms. To the "low" churchman forms and ceremonies are simply a means to an end, and are useless except as they impart a spiritual benefit through a living faith. In a word, the "high" churchman makes much of the *outer,* while the "low" churchman makes more of the *inner* things of religion.

Under various names, such as "Ritualism" and "Pietism," these two forms of church life have existed in the elder Protestant denominations since the days of the Reformation. While in many instances this was the fruitful cause of controversy and persecution, the original creeds remained substantially the same. As a striking example, we have the great Wesleyan (Methodist)

revival in England over a century ago. What can be more unseemly than a comparison between a fiery Methodist evangelist of the olden time, with the tumultuous accompaniments of his eloquence. and a "high" church Episcopal priest with his "sacred vestments" and ceremonials. Day and night are not more dissimilar, *and yet they both stand on the same creed,* the "Thirty-Nine Articles" of the Church of England. The same was true in the German revival in Pennsylvania. **Otterbein, Albright, Gueting,** and their coworkers preached no new creed or faith, but sought to revive the spiritual life of the creeds as inculcated in the fundamental faith of these Churches. The careful student of Church history will observe that the Christian Church in general advances or recedes into one or the other of these conditions, until it assumes its marked characteristics. When the "high" church spirit is in the ascendant, the Church is said to be "ritualistic," and when the opposite spirit prevails it is "spiritual" or "evangelical." It is well that we understand these distinct phases of Church life, for the reason that they explain the origin and character of the **Wesleyan, Otterbein,** and **Albright** movements, all of which are more or less related and spring from the same sources.

In this connection we may say that while it is rather within the province of the theologian than the historian to exemplify the scriptural aspects of these diverse conditions of Church life, nevertheless their origin and development, externally, are proper subjects of historical investigation.

Considering this subject as related to more recent times, we find that the "Low Church" or "Evangelical" spirit has most profoundly impressed the older denominations, and in a great measure changed the very character of their Church life. This is seen in the promotion of evangelistic effort and interdenominational fellowship. Practically all American Protestant denominations now heartily coöperate in the various general organizations that have for their immediate object the salvation and uplift of man. It is further seen in the full recognition given to all Protestant bodies on the basis of holding the "essentials" of faith, and the steady trend to crystallize them all into one common Brotherhood of the Christian Faith, and thus fulfil the prayer of

our Lord and Master "that they may be one" (Jno. 17:21). In the light of these facts, established by a study of the inner history of denominational life, the far-reaching effects of the revival movement of which the work of **Rev. Jacob Albright** was a constituent part, becomes apparent.

We now turn from the consideration of "low church" or evangelical life in general, and trace its unfolding into the various types of Church life and the work of **Albright** as related to them. In its unfolding, the Evangelical element of the movement under consideration, may be traced to two separate streams of influence, each representing a distinct type, though essentially "the same spirit" (1 Cor. 12:4). The first may be denominated the German Pietistic type. As noted in a previous connection, Pietism arose as a protest against the dead formalism of German Protestantism. Owing to the union of Church and State, the German Protestant Church was strongly influenced by secular and political influences in its earlier stages, and spiritual life gave way largely to formalism. The low state of religion led to the revival of Mysticism with its spiritual vagaries and esoterical speculations. The leader of this movement was the noted **Jacob Boehm,** (1575-1624), whose works profoundly impressed the entire Protestant Church for more than a century. Mysticism, however, was the negative pole of Ritualism, and practically rejected the ordinances of the Church as superfluous, and tended directly to Separatism, and by its antagonism to organization and authority in the Church, has always proved fatal to the cultivation of a true Church spirit.

Between the Ritualist and the Mystic arose the Pietist, who accepted the Creed and Ordinances, but rejected all Ritualistic merit. The Pietists were the "Evangelicals" of the German churches. They instituted the "Conventicle," which corresponded to our modern prayer-meetings. Also the *"Colegia Pietates,"* or Schools of Piety, which were on the order of modern Bible conferences or Chautauqua assemblies.

While we must assume that great numbers of truly pious people were found in the Church from the beginning, it was not until formalism and ritualism robbed the Church of her spiritual life and power that Pietism appears in the foreground as a *distinct*

movement within the established Church, having its own leaders, and putting forth a distinctive literature. The movement first assumed large proportions in the Palatinate, where the Lutheran Reformation was early established. A period of formalism set in, and the spiritual element became dissatisfied with the tendency of the Church hierarchy to affiliate with Rome, especially on the Tenth Article of the Augsburg Confession which teaches the doctrine of Consubstantiation, or the bodily presence in the eucharist. It was held that Luther had not gone far enough in throwing off Romish practices. This movement resulted in the birth of the Reformed Church in Germany.[3] The reader will do well to remember this fact, as it marks an epoch in the Pietistic movement under consideration.

The immediate effect of this movement was the establishment of the Reformed universities of Heidelberg and Herborn, which for many years were noted for their orthodoxy and spirituality. Another outcome was the production of the Heidelberg Catechism by **Ursinus** and **Olevianus,** under the direction of the pious Elector of the Palatinate, **Frederick III.** This catechism, which appeared in 1563, is without doubt the most "evangelical" and spiritual of all the doctrinal formularies of the Reformation period. Thus we have seen that the Reformed Church of Germany was founded in an atmosphere of spiritual life, and her struggle against the dead formalism which early invaded Protestantism forms the brightest chapter of her history.

The Evangelical spirit of the early Reformed Church is specially noted by leading historians. **Ikens,** in his "Life of Neander," says, "We must consider Pietism as an integral part of Reformed Church History." **Dr. James I. Good,** in his excellent history of the Reformed Church in Germany, says, "To eliminate Pietism from the Reformed Church would be to eliminate a large part of her best history. Her greatest theologians and best historians, from **Lampe** down to **Krummacher,** were Pietists. Pietism, instead of being opposed to the Reformed Church, became an integral part of her being." (p. 308.)

3 See "History of the Reformed Church in Germany," by Dr. James I. Good.

Apart from the Reformed movements there was also a strong Pietistic element in the Lutheran Church, but being a small minority, it was bitterly opposed by the Church authorities. The great leader of Lutheran Pietism was **Dr. Philip Jacob Spener** (b. 1635—d. 1705), who in his earlier years had been in touch with the Palatine Pietists while he was pastor at Strasburg. The spiritual and evangelical teachings of **Spener** were widely disseminated throughout the Lutheran Church and caused a great agitation. In the city of Erfurt, where **Spener** was pastor, he won many adherents and established one of the first of his *"Colegia Pietates,"* or Schools of Piety. Among his distinguished disciples were his brother-in-law, **Johan H. Herbius, Dr. J. J. Fabricius, Dr. Augustus Herman Francke, Dr. Gottfried Arnold, Dr. J. W. Peterson,** and his celebrated wife, **Johanna von Merlau,** all of whom were noted as leaders and writers in the Pietistic movement. The Chapter at Erfurt soon incurred the disfavor of the authorities, and upon investigation it was ordered to be suppressed and the leaders banished. The persecution of the Pietists now became general, followed by banishment and imprisonment. And all this because the Pietists sought to *live* the life their creed inculcated.

It was during this period of persecution of the Evangelicals amongst them by the Protestants, that **William Penn** and his company made their celebrated tour through Germany (1676), in aid of the cause of spiritual religion. This is a fact vital to our subject, as it was one of the potent causes of the emigration of the large number of Pietists to Pennsylvania, chiefly through the influence of "The Frankford Land Company," which acquired twenty-five thousand acres of land from **Penn** in the vicinity of Philadelphia. This was in 1686. Some of the Pietistic leaders we have named were among its founders. **Dr. Francis Daniel Pastorius,** the founder of Germantown, (1684), was the general agent of the company.

Recurring to the chapter at Erfurt, **Dr. Spener** was the first to be banished. Proceeding to Berlin in 1691, he was received with open arms by the Elector of Brandenburg, **King Frederick I** of Prussia. The king, who was of the Reformed faith, not only

welcomed **Spener** and his fellow Pietists to his realm, but gave to **Spener** the pastorate of the largest Lutheran church in Berlin, and also made him superintendent of churches. Moreover, in order to conserve the Pietistic movement, the king, in 1694, founded the famous University at Halle, where some of the followers of **Spener,** such as **Breithaupt** and associates, were installed as professors. **Dr. Francke,** having been expelled from Erfurt, also came to Halle, where he organized the great Orphanage and Missionary Institute, from which a great stream of evangelical literature and missionary influence poured its spiritual blessings for more than a century into the Protestant Church.

The work of **Dr. Francke,** especially, profoundly impressed the life of the Protestant Church. Among his early students was the youthful **Count Nicholas Zinzendorf,** founder of the Moravian Church, and later still **Henry Melchior Muhlenberg,** of the Lutheran Church, both of whom were Pietists, and both organized their respective churches in America. Such in brief is the story of German Pietism often referred to in this work.

We now turn to the second stream of evangelical influence under consideration, which may be denominated Anglican or Wesleyan, because it had its origin in England, under the labors of **Rev. John Wesley** (b-1702, d-1791). The followers of **Wesley** were called "Methodists" and were so called because of their strict religious life as compared with other professed Christians. The writings of **Wesley** show that he was greatly indebted to the German Pietists for many of the elements that entered into his work. We need only refer to his connection with the Moravians at Herrnhut and his "Notes on the New Testament," one of the doctrinal standards of Methodism, the materials of which he took almost bodily from "Bengel's Gnomon." **Dr. Johann Bengel,** author of this work, was a Lutheran writer of the Pietistic school.

It was in America that these two streams of evangelical influence met—German Pietism and Wesleyan Methodism, each representing a distinct type of religious life, but essentially "the same spirit." It was the coming in contact of these currents of

influence with the dead formalism into which the old churches had already sunk, that gave rise to the evangelistic movements in Pennsylvania which we seek to trace, and with which the work of **Rev. Jacob Albright** and the organization of "The Evangelical Association" stands inseparably connected.

CHAPTER IV.

Albright in Relation to the Methodists and United Brethern.

Not "Methodists" but "Evangelists"—Union with Methodists not desired—Rev. William Otterbein—Why not United Brethren?—Albright's methods—Difference in doctrine and cultus—Testimony of contemporaries.

HAVING described the general evangelistic movements in which the Evangelical Association was born, we now proceed to show the relations of **Albright's** evangelistic work to other contemporary bodies laboring along the same line, and also seek the reasons for the separate continuance of his work. The work of **Albright** must not for a moment be regarded as sporadic and without relation to the organized evangelistic efforts around him. We have already shown that while his work owed something to Methodism for its original trend, and to the parent English Church for its doctrine, nevertheless its genius and spirit was of the German Pietistic type, as from this element it derived fully three-fourths of its early membership. These facts, while not material so far as ultimate results are concerned, are of value in explaining denominational traits which are very marked and which clearly distinguish the Evangelical from the Methodist denominations.

Although in faith and polity **Albright** and his coworkers were in accord with the Methodists, they distinctly disclaimed *being* Methodists. From the very beginning they claimed to be "Evangelical," as the following from the journal of **Rev. George Miller** shows:[1] "One evening (1805) I put up at the house of a man named **Lesher,** in Lancaster County, and was lovingly received. Both in the evening and morning I prayed with them, and as I was about to leave he asked me whether I was not a Methodist preacher. I replied that I was *no* Methodist preacher,

1 "Albright and Miller," p. 83.

'But you are a preacher,' said he, 'and to what denomination do you belong?' I replied, 'I am an *Evangelical* preacher.'" Thus writes **Albright's** biographer, two years before the organization of the conference.

To illustrate the spirit with which **Albright** inspired his followers as to their special duty to evangelize the Germans, we give the following, which also affords an explanation regarding the separate work of the Evangelicals:

Father John Dreisbach, the last surviving colleague of **Albright,** records the fact that in 1810 he rode many miles in company with **Bishop Asbury** and **Henry Boehm,** as they journeyed down the Susquehanna Valley, and that they together sojourned at the house of **"Brother Foulk."** During this long companionship they thoroughly discussed the question of Church union. **Asbury** strongly urged the union and made a very favorable offer to **Dreisbach** individually. **Dreisbach's** proposition was that the Evangelicals would come in a body into the Methodist Church, if they were allowed to continue their distinctive work among the Germans. To this **Bishop Asbury** replied that it was "impractical," as the German language would soon be extinct. How greatly the good bishop was mistaken, appears in the subsequent history of both denominations. It is a noteworthy fact that although both **Asbury** and **Boehm** made record in their respective journals (Aug. 10, 1810), of this journey and their stopping over night at the home of **Foulk,** neither of them mentions **Dreisbach** and the weighty matters discussed. The omission on the part of **Asbury** can only be explained on the assumption that he was opposed to any nativistic deflection of his Church at that time. The good judgment of **Dreisbach** in this matter was vindicated in the fact that the Methodist Church, as early as 1800, had three young men who preached in the German as well as in the English language. They were **Henry Boehm,** son of **Bishop Boehm,** one of the founders of the United Brethren Church, **Jacob Gruber,** and **Peter Beaver,** all Pennsylvania Germans.[3] In 1803-4, **Boehm** and **Gruber** served a Methodist cir-

2 Dreisbach, in "Evangelical Messenger," 1855, p. 26.

3 Rev. Henry Boehm, son of Bishop Martin Boehm, of the United Brethren Church, was born in Lancaster County, Pa., in 1775, and died in

cuit in Eastern Pennsylvania that had thirty preaching places, twenty of which were German appointments.[4] In addition to all this, there were preaching places where the three evangelistic denominations, Methodist, United Brethren, and Evangelical, served in rotation. This is truly remarkable and shows how little **Bishop Asbury,** who was born in England, understood the German spirit.

Recurring again to the origin of the United Brethren and the Evangelical Churches, in the pietistic and evangelistic movement of the Reformed Church in Pennsylvania, we find a radical difference in the character of their development, which tended to keep the two forces separate, although working in the same field and in much the same manner. This leads us to the consideration of a pertinent and vital question: Why did not these two forces join organically? Both denominations suffered alike the reproach and opposition of the old Churches; they had scores of preaching places in common; then why not be one denominationally? In this instance the disinclination seems to have been on the part of the Evangelicals, since the mention in **Bishop Newcomer's** journal, of his repeated efforts to effect a union with "The Albright Brethren" clearly indicates the adverse attitude of the latter toward a union. The last of five such efforts made by him was at the first Evangelical General Conference, in 1816, which resulted in the appointment by the conference of a committee to meet a similar one of the United Brethren. This joint commission met February 14, 1817, but no favorable action resulted.

The thoughtful reader will naturally wish to know what were these differences which formed the barrier to a union so earnestly sought by the good **Bishop Newcomer.** This leads us to recur to the origin of both denominations. While the Evangelicals undoubtedly had their origin in the same movement as the United

1875, aged 100 years. His "Reminiscences" is an interesting book. Jacob Gruber was born in 1778, and died 1850. He was an eccentric man and his autobiography is vastly interesting. Peter Beaver died at New Berlin, Pa., in 1849, aged 67 years. He was the grandfather of Gen. James A. Beaver, governor of Pennsylvania.

4 "Boehm's Reminiscences," p. 106.

Brethren, nevertheless each took a different trend at its very beginning. While the Reformed evangelists had little to do with the Albright ministry, because it was composed of laymen, yet its constituency was almost wholly Reformed Pietistic. On the other hand, most of the United Brethren ministers, headed by **Dr. William Otterbein,** had been connected with the Reformed Church. Then, too, there was a large number of both ministers and members who came from the Mennonite Church. It was evidently the influx of this element into the United Brethren Church that so affected its faith and polity as to render a union with the "Albrights" impractical. Passing over the difficulties that acted unfavorably to a union in later years, a consideration of conditions as they existed in the days of **Albright,** will illuminate the question as to why **Albright** did not, in the beginning of his ministry, connect himself with **Riegel, Grosh** and the **Hersheys,** all from his own neighborhood, in their evangelistic work. Although **Albright** could join with them, as elsewhere shown, in their "Sacramental Meetings" as they called them, there must have been a very serious obstacle to prevent his joining in a movement that on general principles should otherwise have appealed to him. These reasons we now proceed to set forth, and, in order to avoid all imputation of bias against the United Brethren Church, we will let the writers of that Church give us what, in our opinion, constituted the points of difficulty.

In order to do this we will enumerate three prominent characteristics in the ministerial life of **Albright,** which stand out in clear relief in his personal history and which undoubtedly prevented his connection with the United Brethren work.

First of all, **Albright** was a strict *doctrinarian* and held tenaciously to the old creed, and in his sermons sought to show how the old Churches had lost sight of the spiritual life of their own standards of faith. The United Brethren, instead of retaining the old creed, as did the Methodists and Albrights, adopted a new one of seven propositions, several of which are doctrinally different from the old confession. How **Otterbein,** one of the founders, and who professed to remain true to the Heidelberg Catechism, the doctrinal standard of the Reformed Church, could do so and yet hold to the seventh tenet his following adopted, we cannot under-

stand. This refers especially to the article on the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Will the reader compare Articles XXVII and XXVIII of the Anglican Confession, as adopted by the Methodist and "Albrights," and also Questions 66, 69 and 71 in the Heidelberg Catechism in harmony with them, and the following from the United Brethren creed: "We recommend that the outward signs and ordinances, namely, baptism and the remembrance of the Lord in the distribution of the bread and wine, be observed; also the washing of feet where the same is desired."[5] This was somewhat but not materially changed in later years.

The second prominent trait in the character of **Albright** was his love of *order* and *discipline*. This was an element sadly wanting in the formative period of the United Brethren movement. On this subject we will let one of their own historians speak: "The early United Brethren came mostly from other Churches whose polity was essentially non-itinerant, and its itinerant service for a time was chiefly that of evangelistic visitation; the true itinerant feeling and system being not yet developed."[6]

The results of this chaotic condition of affairs is vividly brought out in the following extract from **Bishop Newcomer's** journal, under date of May 10, 1809:[7] "This day the session of our conference convened at **Christian Herr's** in Lancaster County, and continued till twelve o'clock at night. Different subjects came up for consideration, particularly the case of a closer fellowship with our Methodist brethren. My wish and desire was to have both order and discipline established in our society, and some of my brethren were of opinion that this was unnecessary, and that the Word of God alone was sufficient, and were therefore opposed to all discipline. I could plainly perceive that this opposition originated in prejudice; therefore I sincerely and fervently prayed for the illumination of the Holy Spirit. The Lord owned my prayers when I almost despaired of success, and had nearly

5 "History of the Reformed Church in America," by Dr. J. I. Good, pp. 498, 503. Berger's "History of the United Brethren Church," pp. 137, 503, etc.

6 Berger's "History of the United Brethren Church," p. 195.

7 Newcomer's Journal, p. 175.

determined to leave and withdraw from the Society." **Bishop Asbury,** of the Methodist Church, who was an intimate friend of **Otterbein,** thus writes in his journal, on August 2, 1803:[8] "I feel and have felt for thirty-two years for Pennsylvania, the most wealthy and the most careless about God; * * * but I hope God will shake the State and Church. There are now upwards of twenty German preachers somehow connected with **Mr. Otterbein** and **Martin Boehm,** but they want authority and the Church wants discipline."

The third specific trait in the character of **Albright** that made him inimical to the movement under consideration, was his *churchly spirit* and belief in the orderly organization of the spiritual people into classes for the purpose of discipline and mutual edification. This is seen in the beginning of his ministry when, as early as 1800, he formed his people into *classes,* and thereafter in all other places, as soon as there were a sufficient number to effect such organizations. Of this there is abundant proof in the detailed accounts of his work in this volume. Practically the opposite spirit prevailed in the United Brethren Church, as appears from the following: "The lack of a denominational spirit also worked to the serious injury of the Church even down to a period as late as 1830. The brethren, as already seen, were converts from the various German Churches, all of whom were of the straightest sect, against the intolerant sectarian spirit to which they had been accustomed." The reaction of those converts, when they found themselves to be all one in Christ by virtue of the new birth, was so powerful as to push many of them into an opposite direction."[9]

The United Brethren had no organizations such as the Albright brethren had. While **Albright** enjoined the keeping of records of membership, the United Brethren kept no such records. An effort in their conference to inaugurate class discipline and records was defeated in the session of 1802.[10] Up to the year 1812 all the ministers of the United Brethren Church were unordained, with the exception of **Dr. Otterbein,** and the confer-

8 Bishop Asbury's Journal, Vol. III, p. 110.

9 Lawrence, "History of the United Brethren Church, Vol. II, p. 24.

10 Berger's "History of the United Brethren Church," p. 171.

ence by vote authorized certain men to administer the ordinances.[11] At the session of 1812 there were twenty ministers so authorized. "Exhorters" were licensed by the annual conference, and their local preachers had an equal voice in the conferences with the itinerants. This latter fact was one of the obstacles in the way of a union in 1817, after some of the earlier objections had disappeared.[12] How this condition of affairs in the United Brethren Church was viewed by others, will be seen in the following extract from the writings of **Rev. Henry Boehm,** whose father, **Bishop Martin Boehm,** was one of the founders of the United Brethren Church. He says[13] that in 1799 he accompanied his father on a ministerial tour to Maryland and Virginia, and that at the house of **Peter Kemp,** in Frederick County, Maryland, he attended a conference at which his father and **Rev. William Otterbein** were unanimously elected to the office of bishop. His impressions of the conference and how it influenced his future course he gives as follows: "They had at this time but little order or discipline, and what I had seen of the order and discipline of the Methodists at General Conference in Baltimore and at the Philadelphia conference, showed me the vast superiority of the latter, and I made up my mind to enter their itinerancy." The fact that in after years the United Brethren brought order and discipline out of these confused conditions does not affect our statements as to the cause of **Albright** standing aloof from that movement. We have described the conditions *then* existing and the reader must be left to draw his own conclusions.

11 Berger's "History of the United Brethren Church," p. 181.

12 Dreisbach's letter in the "Evangelical Messenger" in 1855. He was a member of this Joint Commission.

13 "Boehm's Reminiscences," p. 56.

CHAPTER V.

The First Sowing. (1796-1803.)

Albright begins his labors—Shafferstown dedication—Early persecutions—Tours eastern Pennsylvania—Organizes the Walter's, Leeser's, and Phillips' classes—Zimmermans—Jonestown—The first Pentecostal meeting—The Millers and Brobsts converted—John Walter a co-laborer—Preaches in Lancaster and Dauphin Counties—Begins his work beyond the Susquehanna—Remarkable meetings at John Thomas'—The provisional class—First church land given—His second assistant—His ordination.

IN the month of October, 1796, **Jacob Albright** entered the field as an independent evangelist among the Pennsylvania Germans. It is difficult for us to comprehend properly what a sacrifice this step involved on his part. He had a farm and stock that needed care during his absence. His other lucrative occupations had to be relinquished without any compensating income from his ministerial labors. In addition to these great sacrifices, there awaited him persecutions and the hardships of his itinerant labors that laid the foundation of the sickness that cut short his life in the best years of his career.

Prior to 1800 he extended his tours southward into Western Maryland, the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, and Berkeley County in West Virginia. Prior to this date we can find no trace of his labors west of the Susquehanna River, except the fact of his tours.[1] In Eastern Pennsylvania, however, we can readily trace his footsteps as he seems to have established a number of well-defined routes long before the above date.

The first tangible evidence we have of his ministry was on the occasion of the dedication of a Reformed church at Shafferstown, Pa., on October 8, 1797,[2] where he began to preach to an over-

1 See "Albright and Miller," p. 26.

2 For an account of this dedication, see Bishop Newcomer's Journal, p. 32. He was present and preached from Heb. 2:3. The date hitherto given in Evangelical publications as 1796, is one year too early.

flow assembly in the open market shed near the church, but was attacked by a mob and the meeting broken up.

After the dedication of the Reformed church, the United Brethren preachers, **Newcomer** and **Gueting,** had a service at the home of **G. Zentmayer,** a prominent member of that church, who was a thorough Pietist, and afterwards opened his house as a preaching place for **Albright.**[3]

In 1799 **Albright** again preached in the Shafferstown market house during the "cherry fair," a yearly frolic held when cherries were ripe, and was again assaulted by his enemies with almost fatal results, as noted elsewhere. But these meetings were not without good results, for amongst the hearers of **Albright** were several men who afterward became quite prominent in his work, such as **George Becker** and **Jacob Bricker,** with whom we shall meet in another connection.

One of the earliest and most fruitful fields of **Albright's** evangelistic work was the mountainous region north of his birthplace. Only a few miles from his natal home near the Colebrookdale Iron Works in Berks County, Pa., lived the brothers, **Abraham** and **Joseph Bookwalter,** both of whom opened their homes to him in the beginning of his ministry, as did also **Alexander Jamison.** Some miles north of this, near the Hoff Reformed church, in Herford Township, were the brothers **Samuel** and **Abraham Leeser,** also of the first. Turning eastward, a few hours' ride brought him into the Schwenkfelder settlements, at the line of Bucks and Montgomery Counties. Here he had early access, as we shall see. Thence to Rock Hill, three miles east of Quakertown, Bucks County. Here lived Father **Peter Walter** and his large family, with whom we shall again meet presently. Three miles north of **Walter's,** in Richland Township, Bucks County, was the home of **Charles Bisse.** All of those places lay within a distance of twenty miles. From this region his route led about a day's journey beyond the Blue Mountains, in Hamilton Township, then Northampton, now Monroe County. Here lived father **George Phillips,** a Revolutionary soldier, and his

3 This and other facts and incidents were related in 1827 to Rev. Jos. Saylor, by the widow of Mr. Zentmayer, whose home was then still an Evangelical preaching place.

two married sons, **Jacob** and **Conrad**, and the **Riedy, Miller,** and **Hecht** families.

Albright's entrance among Schwenkfelders[4] was on this wise: In Upper Hanover Township, Montgomery County, in one of his tours **Albright** came to the home of a Schwenkfelder whose child was about to be buried, and he accompanied the funeral cortege to the little church where the obsequies were to be held. At the close of the pastor's sermon, **Albright** asked his permission to speak also, which was granted. His discourse was acceptable to many, and he was given permission to preach repeatedly, but when, later, opposition was manifested, he ceased to preach in the church. He had however won many friends, and soon a prominent Schwenkfelder, **David Shultz,** opened his house to him as a place of worship. The seed thus sown, amid much opposition, in after years brought forth a rich harvest.

First Pentecostal Meeting.—The first gathering of **Albright** with any number of his adherents from different places, occurred on this eastern field soon after he began his active work. That such a meeting was held, rests on the authority of **Rev. Charles Bisse,** one of his first adherents, who was wont to relate that he was one of five who met with **Albright** for the purpose of prayer and consultation in the beginning of his ministry. It is quite probable that this meeting was held in the home of **Father Walter,**[5] whose house was central to the **Leesers, Buchwalters** and **Bisses,** and doubtless they were the ones present. The purpose of the meeting was to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the success of the evangelistic work in which **Albright**

4 Followers of Casper von Schwenkfeld, a contemporary of Martin Luther.

5 Peter Walter was a Revolutionary soldier. His family consisted of four sons and four daughters, as follows: Joseph (1778-1857); Rev. John, Albright's first assistant (1781-1818); Abraham, a local preacher; Peter; Lena, married a Douglas; Sarah, married J. Hockman; Christena, married John Lesher; Rebecca, married G. Bader. The three last named moved to Ohio in the early days. Father Walter removed to (now) Mt. Nebo, in Lebanon County, in 1805, and later to Turkey Valley, Juniata County, where he died about 1828. His son, Rev. Abraham Walter, also died there in 1857.

was engaged. How God honored these prayers will be seen in the success of **Albright's** work which this book records.

The First Classes.—Before we trace the labors of **Albright** into other regions, we will note the organizations which he effected in this, his field of first sowing. Sometime in 1800 he deemed it expedient to organize into classes those who regarded him as their pastor.

Walter's Class.—The first class organized was at the home of **Peter Walter,** in Rock Hill, Bucks County. He and his wife **Margaret,** were the parents of a large family, all of them prominent in the formative period of the Church. In their home was doubtless held the first Pentecostal meeting, as well as the first class organization. From this home **Albright** also secured his first assistant in the person of **John Walter,** the second son, who, in 1802, at the age of twenty years left the parental home to enter the evangelistic field. We thus see an early fruitage of the Pentecostal meeting. **Rev. Charles Bisse,** too, was a member of this first class, of whom more is told in another connection.

Leeser's Class.—The **Leesers**[6] lived near Barto, in Berks County. There were two brothers of this name, **Samuel** and **Abraham,** both members of the Hoff Reformed church, near by. These, with **Abraham** and **Joseph Buchwalter** and their families, and **Alexander Jamison,** were the principal members of the class. **Samuel Leeser,** the class leader, was a substantial farmer. In his commodious stone house **Albright** was ordained.

6 Samuel and Abraham Leeser were sons of Benedict Leeser. Samuel, the class leader, was born 1761, and died 1836. He was a Revolutionary soldier. His brother, Rev. Abraham, was born 1770, and died 1805. Mrs. Anna Leeser, "one of the first members," died 1838, aged 82 years. Abraham Buchwalter was born 1761, and died in Ross County, Ohio, 1837. His wife, Barbara, born 1764, also died there, 1868, aged 102 years. Their son John, born 1787, died 1872, was also one of the first, and was licensed to preach in 1812. His wife, Susanna, *nee* Dreisbach, died 1881. Joseph Buchwalter was born 1767, and died in Ross County, Ohio, 1838. The Buchwalters moved to Ohio in 1820. Jacob Phillips, local preacher, died 1809. In 1811 Conrad Phillips removed to (now) Winfield, in Union County, to a farm adjoining Father Eyer, where he died 1816. His aged father died there also in 1822. Adam Miller died in Crawford County, Ohio, 1848, aged 81 years. His house was one of the first preaching places of Albright. Barbara Hecht died 1808, leaving a bequest of $100 to the "Albright preachers." This was the first bequest received.

Phillips' Class was organized at the home of **George Phillips**, already named. The leading members of this class were **George Phillips**, his sons, **Conrad** and **Jacob, Peter** and **Jacob Riedy, Philip** and **Adam Miller**, all heads of families, also **Mrs. Barbara Hecht.**

In West Penn Township in (now) Schuylkill County, lived **Leonard Zimmerman**, who had been an officer in the Revolutionary War.[7] He and his wife, **Sophia**, were the parents of a large family. The home of this godly man was opened as early as 1797, as a preaching place for **Albright** and other evangelistic ministers. His pastor, of the Reformed Church, accompanied by his church official, called upon him and requested him to close his house against "the false prophets," as he called the evangelists. To this **Father Zimmerman** replied that it was high time that a religious reformation take place in that community, and he did not expect it to come through his "church preacher."

Father Zimmerman was a liberal minded man, and, up to the time of his death in 1812, the first German preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, as well as the Evangelicals, preached at his house. A number of his children were married and heads of families and also opened their homes as preaching places. We will meet them in another chapter. **Leonard**, the youngest son of **Father Zimmerman**, was licensed as a minister in 1811. Great revivals took place here at an early day and a class was formed in 1803.

Jonestown.—In the vicinity of Jonestown, Lebanon County, **Albright** gained entrance prior to 1800. The preaching places were at the homes of **Ludwig Zearing** and **Adam Faber**, prominent members of the Reformed Church. The work of the evangelists was violently opposed by the old "church people" and on two occasions they were mobbed during their services, but were providentially saved from serious consequences. In 1805 **Peter Walter**, the first class leader, moved to this place from Bucks County and a class was formed.[8]

7 First lieutenant, Second Company, First Battalion, Northampton County Militia (Fifth Series), Vol. VIII, p. 79, Pennsylvania Archives.

8 Vide "Evangelical Annals," pp. 46-48.

Fishing Creek.—Early in his ministry **Albright** gained entrance in Fishing Creek Valley, Dauphin County. We have traced conversions in this place back to 1801.[9] Among the preaching places were the homes of **Philip** and **Benjamin Stroh.** The former at an early day removed to Ohio, where he was one of the first members. Here occurred the earliest known baptism by **Albright,** when in 1803 he baptized **Mary Ann,** daughter of **Benjamin Stroh,** who afterwards married **George Gipple.** As an interesting sequence, **George Gipple,** who was leader of the Stroh class, in 1852, removed to Iowa, and through him the first Evangelical church was built in that State, at Grandview, in 1857. In his home county of Lancaster, also, **Albright** undoubtedly preached in the early stages of his ministry. The earliest place we have been able to locate was at the home of **Mrs. Anna Thomas,** a widow, who lived in Manor Township. By a former marriage she had two sons, **Jacob** and **John Ripley,** and by a second she had **David** and **Christian Thomas.** Of these the **Ripley** brothers and **David Thomas** became useful Evangelical ministers at an early day. The meetings at the home of **Mrs. Thomas** date back to 1802 and perhaps earlier. From this place the Evangelical work soon spread in various directions. A great revival took place in this region in 1807, at which time a young man named **John Erb** was converted, soon afterwards began to preach, and in 1809 entered the regular ministry.

Conversion of the Miller and Brobst Families.—Sometime during the Revolution, a man named **Jacob Miller** and his wife, **Elisabeth,** removed from Pottstown to the vicinity of Reading, in Berks County. Among their children were four sons, **George, Solomon, John** and **Frederick,** all of whom were well instructed in the doctrines of the Lutheran Church and became members of the same.

In 1798 **George Miller,** one of the sons, who lived in Brunswick Township, in (now) Schuylkill County, attended a service held in his vicinity by **Albright.** The evangelist preached from

9 Mrs. Hoffman, who died in Ohio in 1863, aged 78 years, was converted here, "under Albright," in 1800. Benjamin Stroh died in 1855, aged 84 years. Mary Ann Gipple, his daughter, who was baptized by Albright, died at Grandview, Iowa, in 1891, aged 88 years.

the words *"Behold I set before you the way of life and the way of death"* (Jer. 21:8). The sermon deeply impressed **Miller** and produced a penitential frame of mind in him. He did not, however, at that time find the desired peace. In 1800 he married **Magdalena Brobst,** daughter of a wealthy iron master. In 1802 he was visited by **Albright,** who remained during the night, and the following day they went together a distance of ten miles to **Leonard Zimmerman's,** where **Albright** had services. During this meeting **Miller** was brought into the clear experience of saving grace. His brother, **Solomon,** who also lived in this locality, was passing through a similar penitential struggle as the result of **Albright's** preaching. In the fall of this year the two brothers attended a "general meeting" at the Phillips appointment, over twenty miles distant, where for the first time they heard the young and eloquent **John Walter,** who preached with wonderful power. The faith of the **Millers** was greatly strengthened and thereafter they both opened their homes as preaching places for **Albright.**

On Easter Day, 1803, **Albright** held a "general meeting" at **Solomon Miller's,** where he preached with such extraordinary power that many were overcome by a sense of sin and cried aloud for mercy, while others fled from the house in consternation. We will again touch on the far-reaching results of this meeting, after a brief digression.

Some miles south of the **Millers,** in Albany Township, Berks County, was situated the Union Iron Works, consisting of a blast furnace and two forges. The proprietor was **Michael Brobst,** a man of wealth who had seen much service as an officer in the Revolution.[10] This man, at the time we notice him, was old, and his children were heads of families. Two of his daughters, **Magdalena** and **Maria,** were married to the brothers **George** and **Solomon Miller,** respectively, and both of them with their husbands were converted under the preaching of **Albright,** as narrated. **Colonel Brobst** had two sons, **John** and **Michael, Jr.,** who were associated with their father in business. These brothers

10 He entered as captain in 1776, and arose by promotion to commander of his battalion (colonel) at the close of the war. See Pennsylvania Archives (Fifth Series), Vol. VIII.

with their wives were also converted at the Easter meeting mentioned.

Colonel Brobst was a religious paradox. His house became a preaching place for **Albright** and his co-laborers,[11] and yet he sought to kill his son-in-law, **George Miller,** for being a minister. The home of his son, **John Brobst,** also, was a preaching place and a noted place for meetings. As a result of the Easter meeting (1803) at **Solomon Miller's** a class was formed immediately thereafter and **George Miller** was appointed leader.

We now turn our attention to another locality where **Albright** gained access in the early part of his ministry. About ten miles southwest of the Union Iron Works is the town of Hamburg, on the Schuylkill River, and immediately west of this is Bern Township, in Berks County. At Hamburg **Albright** preached as early as 1801, at the home of a man named **Diehl.** In Bern Township the preaching places were the homes of **John Miller,** a brother of **George** and **Solomon; Valentine Brobst, Jacob Kline,** and **P. Dundore. Frederick Miller,** the youngest son of the **Miller** brothers, was also one of the early converts. Later he removed to Lehigh County where he died in 1854, leaving a large estate to the Evangelical Association. A class was formed in Bern in 1805. In Lynn Township, Lehigh County, **Albright** also gained open doors at the homes of **George Custer** and **Sol. W. Frederick,** soon after 1800. In 1842 the widow of **Custer** died, leaving a substantial bequest[12] to the Evangelical Association.

Trans-Susquehanna.—As previously noted, no definite traces of **Albright's** work west of the Susquehanna River appear prior to 1800. Soon after that date, however, we find him following in the wake of the United Brethren pioneers who before the above date had visited many localities in Perry, Juniata, Snyder, Union, and Centre Counties.[13] In this connection it must be remembered that the Methodist, the Otterbein, and the Albright evangelists had many preaching places in common. Most of the churches were closed against them and they therefore held their

11 Vide "Albright and Miller," p. 97.

12 Vide "Evangelical Annals," p. 96, for an account of the legacies.

13 Vide Newcomer's Journal, p. 75.

services in houses and barns, the owners of which permitted all evangelists to hold meetings. Many "big meetings" were held jointly, as appears in the journals of the evangelists that have been preserved. It will be our purpose in this connection to trace the beginnings of **Albright's** work in the regions under consideration.

From the journal of **Bishop Newcomer**, of the United Brethren Church, we note that he preached at the homes of **Abraham Eyer, Martin Dreisbach, Jr., John Aurand, Sr.,** and **John Rank, Sr.,** in Union County; **John Rough,** in Juniata County; **John Walter, Sr.,** in Snyder County, and **J. Steffy,** in Centre County, as early as 1800, and as all the foregoing homes are known to have been preaching places of **Albright** a few years later, it is a fair presumption that these places were included in his itinerary some years earlier.

The Thomas Class.—Soon after 1800, **Albright** gained entrance in a community in Decatur Township, Mifflin County. Their pastor was a drunkard and the moral condition of the place was deplorable in the extreme. The principal men who received **Albright** into their homes were **John Thomas**[14] and **David Herpster, Sr.** Both had been soldiers of the Revolution, the former an officer, and had removed to this locality from near Shafferstown, Lebanon County. Both **Thomas** and **Herpster** were well advanced in life, and their children mostly mar-

14 John Thomas was a grandson of Durst Thomas, who came from Germany in 1736, and was one of the first settlers at Shafferstown, in Lebanon County. In 1767 John Thomas was married to Anna Mary Reiss, of Mill Creek, with whom he reared a large family. He was a lieutenant in Colonel Greenawalt's First Battalion, Lancaster County Militia, in the Revolution, Pennsylvania Archives, Vol. VII (Fifth Series). Their family of ten children with their families, so far as known, all became members of the Church under Albright. They were Barbara, born 1771, married John Harpster; Catharine, married George Harpster, and died at Carey, Ohio, 1854, aged 80 years; Susan, married Fred Harpster; Margaret, born 1783, married Jacob Treas; Elisabeth, married John Lauzer; John (Rev.), born 1785; Mary, married Jacob Reber; ————, Mrs. Isaac Gill; and George, and Mrs. Fred Wales. Andrew Wender also was a Revolutionary soldier. He died in Ohio in 1846, aged 83 years. His sons, Mathias and Daniel, were Evangelical preachers. The latter died in 1887, at Blue Springs, Neb., aged 96 years.

ried and heads of families. **Andrew Wonder,** who had lately moved hither from York County, also opened his home as a preaching place. **Albright's** adherents numbered near a dozen families and constituted the strongest local constituency in his entire work.

In the fall of 1802, **Albright** and his assistant, **John Walter,** held a general meeting in the orchard of **Thomas.** This was the second meeting of the kind in his ministry, and being a novelty in this community, it attracted great crowds of people. On Sunday morning **Albright** preached from the words, *"I am the Light of the world"* (Jno. 7:12). The sermon had a wonderful effect; many persons were converted, and the work spread to other places. The following June (1803), a similar meeting was held by the same evangelists at the same place which was even more successful. Following these meetings the converted people formed themselves into a class for mutual edification, in 1803. This class (now Lauver's class), has had a continuous existence ever since, and is the oldest organization in the entire Evangelical connection.

Not only is the Lauver class the oldest, but the church in which it worships represents the oldest realty in our connection. In 1812 **Father Thomas** sold part of his farm to his son, **Rev. John Thomas,** in the deed of which he describes one of the bounds as being "my church land," thus showing that he had previously dedicated land for Church purposes. **Father Thomas** died in 1813, and was buried on his "church land," his son **John** being the officiating minister. About ten years later, his wife also died and was buried by his side. Many years after the death of **Father Thomas,** his grandson, the late **Jacob Lauver,** by deed of gift carried out the design of the patriarch and conveyed the "church land" legally to the society. The officers of this first class (1803), were **Frederick Herpster,** leader, and **Isaac Gill,** assistant, both sons-in-law of **Father Thomas. John Thomas,** the son, was made a local preacher by **Albright** in 1807, as also **Frederick Herpster,** near the same time. Between 1822 and 1826 the **Wonder** family, **Rev. John Thomas,** and all the sons-in-law of **Father Thomas,** with the exception of **Jacob**

Lauver, removed to Ohio, where the descendants have borne a conspicuous part in building up the Evangelical work.

In Pfoutz Valley, Juniata County, **Albright** and **Walter** are also known to have conducted meetings as early as 1803. Here was a Reformed church and a small congregation much neglected as already noted. **Bishop Newcomer** preached here in 1800, at the house of **John Rough,** but nothing definite was accomplished until the advent of **Albright.** The preaching places were at the homes of **John Rough** and **J. Diehl.** Conversions occurred here under **Albright** and **Walter** in 1803, and ere the close of the year the "praying people" were organized into a class.[15]

Ordination of Albright.—The year 1803 closed with the most important event in the ministerial career of **Albright.** He had now labored seven full years in the gospel ministry. He had established many regular preaching places, and many people regarded him as their spiritual guide. Besides this, God had given him two helpers in the work to which he was called. Notwithstanding all this, he had no ministerial standing, for the reason that he was not ordained. In another connection we discuss his peculiar relations to his contemporaries, and the probable reasons why he did not seek ordination through one of the old denominations. Be that as it may, the time had come when his adherents decided to place the seal of their approval on his ministry by ordination. It would be interesting to know who took the initiative in this matter and issued the call, but the records are silent and we are left to speculation.

On November 3, 1803, **Albright** and his assistants, **Walter** and **Leeser,** and fourteen of his principal laymen, assembled at the home of **Samuel Leeser,** in Berks County, to confer on their chief pastor an ecclesiastical status as they understood it. While

15 The St. James' Evangelical church, about six miles northwest of Liverpool, Pa., now represents this old class. John Rough died in 1846, aged 70 years. His wife died near Berrean Springs, Mich., whither his son, John Rough, Jr., had removed. Father Rough bequeathed $200 to the Evangelical Charitable Society. Mrs. Diehl died 1858, aged 93 years. Mrs. Julianna Fry died in 1857, aged 88 years. In the obituaries of all these people their relation to Albright and the early Evangelical work is stated.

they were unable to place him in the line of the "apostolic succession," so called, they were nevertheless following the example of other pious believers, whose action the great Head of the Church approved, as is shown by subsequent results. Those present, besides the two ministers, **Walter** and **Leeser** and their host, were **Peter Walter,** father of **Rev. John Walter; Charles Bisse; George Phillips** and his sons, **Jacob** and **Conrad; Adam Miller** and **Jacob Riedy,** the latter five from the Phillips class; the brothers **George** and **Solomon Miller, Christian** and **Michael Brobst,** from the Miller class, and **Solomon W. Fredreci,** of Lehigh County. All the classes were represented. The assembly was in session several days and acted in a legislative capacity. They transacted the following business:

(1) They declared themselves an ecclesiastical organization, and adopted the Holy Scriptures as their guide and rule of faith.

(2) They declared **Jacob Albright** a minister of the gospel, in the full sense of the word, and recognized him as their teacher and overseer.

(3) He was solemnly ordained as such by his assistants, **Walter** and **Leeser.**

(4) He was then given a certificate signed by all present as follows:

From the Elders and Brethren of His Society of Evangelical Friends:

We the undersigned Evangelical and Christian friends, declare and recognize **Jacob Albright** *as a genuine ("Wahrhaftigen") Evangelical preacher in word and deed, and a believer in the Universal Christian Church and the communion of saints. This testify we as brethren and elders of his Society.* (Gemeinde.)

Given in the State of Pennsylvania, Nov. 5, 1803.

The certificate was signed by the two ministers who ordained him, and the fourteen "Brethren and Elders."

In closing this period we see how God blessed the work of **Albright** in the conversion of many souls. Five classes had been organized, namely, **Walter's, Leeser's, Phillips', Zimmerman's** and **Miller's,** besides the provisional classes west of the Susquehanna River. General meetings had been introduced and had

been held as follows: The first at **Leesers'** in June, 1802; the second at **Thomas'** in the autumn of the same year; the third a few weeks later at **Conrad Phillips'**, the fourth at **Solomon Miller's** over Easter, 1803, and another at **Thomas'** after harvest of the same year. These meetings were held over Saturday and Sunday, and were generally attended by the ministers and laity from far and near.

PRESENT APPEARANCE (1917) OF "OLD ST. ELIAS" CHURCH AT MIFFLINBURG, PA., IN WHICH ALBRIGHT AND COWORKERS FREQUENTLY PREACHED. IT WAS HERE HE PREACHED THE GREAT SERMON DESCRIBED BY FATHER RANK.

CHAPTER VI.

The Widening Field.

Alexander Jamison—Division of the work—Northumberland Circuit—Early preaching places—A year of great trial—Miller's successful labors—Forms many new classes—The Millbach and Cocalico—Remarkable incidents at New Berlin—The opened door—Far-reaching results—Preaching in "The State House" at York—The work in Virginia—Maryland—Trans-Allegheny.

THE work was now divided into two circuits. The new field was called Northumberland, being mostly embraced in a county of that name, which was later divided into many others. **John Walter** and **Alexander Jamison** were appointed to this new charge. Their field of labor lay in the present counties of Perry, Juniata, Snyder, Mifflin, Union, and Centre, most of which were formed out of Northumberland County. Besides this region, they also preached beyond the Allegheny Mountains, in Bedford and Somerset Counties.

Before considering the spread of the Evangelical work in general, we will enumerate the preaching places on the new field, omitting those in the western part of the state, which will be considered later. We do this in order to show what **Albright**, almost single-handed, had accomplished before the formation of the circuit, and also for the reason that the reader will note, later on, that almost every home where preaching was maintained became a centre of Evangelical influence and where classes were subsequently formed. In this we see how God honored the piety and devotion of the families who were willing to dedicate their home as sanctuaries and suffer reproach and persecution for the sake of the gospel.

We will now take a survey of the field by accompanying one of the evangelists on one of his rounds on the eastern end of his circuit, in 1804. Coming from the old, we reach the new circuit at **John Rough's**, in Pfoutz Valley, Juniata County, which we

have already considered. We may here note that the Evangelical work has continued at this place since 1802 and has spread far and wide. Continuing northward about fifteen miles, we reach the home of **John Swartz,** in Chapman Township, Snyder County. Then northwest to **John Walter, Sr.,** on Middle Creek, whose home was a preaching place for **Bishop Newcomer** prior to 1800. Still farther westward, on Black Oak Ridge, lived **William Becker,** a Revolutionary soldier, who met **Albright** at the great meetings at **Father Thomas'** in 1802.[1] At Freeburg lived **Charles Straub,** and several miles from him was the home of **Henry Smith.** Then there were preaching places at the Beaver Dam (Beaver Springs), whither the work had spread from the Thomas appointment, which was an hour's ride west of this.

Having already noted the latter place, we now return east to the Susquehanna River. At Winfield, Union County, we reach the home of **Abraham Eyer,** where the evangelists preached as early as 1800. We now proceed westward up Dry Valley about six miles, and reach the home of **Michael Maize,** who with his widowed mother and several brothers had moved hither from Shafferstown.

Two miles farther on was New Berlin, later the county seat of Union County, and for nearly half a century the headquarters of the Evangelical Association. Here we turn northward and cross the Shamokin Mountain into Buffalo Valley and soon reach the Dreisbach church. This vicinity was the most important place in the early history of the Evangelical Association. The first preaching places—some doubtless before the formation of the circuit—were at the homes of **Martin Dreisbach, Jr.; John Aurand,** and his sons, **Rev. Dietrick** and **John; Philip Hoy** and **George Wendel Wolf.** Westward a few miles lived **Elias Youngman,** the founder of Youngmanstown, now Mifflinburg. Prior to 1800, **Youngman** built the St. Elias Reformed church which was open to all evangelists. In this old landmark (still standing), **Bishop Newcomer, Albright,** and many others frequently preached.

1 Vide "Flashlights on Evangelical History," by the present author, for an interesting account of "Squire" Becker.

We now return to the river at New Columbia, about ten miles from Mifflinburg. Here lived **John Rank, Sr.**, who had moved hither from Lancaster County where he had lived neighbor to **Albright. Bishop Newcomer** preached in his house here in 1800. In the house of **Rank** and his neighbor **Jacob Hoch** (now High), **Albright** and colleagues preached before the formation of the new circuit. This was the most northern appointment on the charge.

We now retrace our steps through Buffalo Valley. Going westward a full day's journey, we reach the east end of Penns Valley, Centre County. Here at Woodward, were several preaching places. We first note **Captain Michael Motz,** who had rendered such valuable service in the Revolution in defending the frontiers against the Indians.[2] It is an interesting fact that four daughters of **Captain Motz** married four brothers named **Wise,** as follows: **Eve, Susan, Catharine,** and **Rebecca** married **John, George, Jacob,** and **Conrad Wise,** respectively. All these are said to have been early Evangelicals. **Bishop Newcomer** and his associates found entrance with **Captain Motz** in 1800, and without doubt **Albright** also. **Captain Motz** never left his Church, but his family were prominent in the early days of the Evangelical Association. The house of **John Wise,** his son-in-law, was the chief preaching place of the Albrights from 1802 to his death in 1844.

From Woodward we go westward up Penns Valley ten miles, to Millheim. Here we reach the house of **George Swartz.** Continuing our journey, an hour's ride brings us to the home of **Abraham Ream.** His house was a preaching place in 1802. In 1803 **Albright** baptized Ream's son, **Michael.** We push on to the home of **John Steffy,** near the present town of Lemont. Here **Newcomer** and other evangelists preached as early as 1800. It was in this home that **Rev. Matthias Betz,** the spiritual father

2 Captain Motz commanded Eighth Company, Third Battalion, Northumberland Militia (Pennsylvania Archives, Fifth Series, Vol. VIII. p. 654). He was born 1738, in Berks County, and before the Revolution, with his brothers, George and John, removed to (now) Snyder County. Captain Motz died in 1823. The Motz family Bible, brought with them from Germany, in 1731, is in possession of the author of this work.

of **Bishop Seybert,** died in 1813. This was the west end of this part of the circuit. From here the evangelists could go south over the Seven Mountains, or westward over the Alleghenies to Morrison's Cove, Bedford County, and Wills Creek, near Cumberland, Maryland, over a hundred miles distant, all of which was part of the new circuit.

The year 1804 seems to have been a season of great hardship and trial for **Albright** and his coworkers. We learn of no revivals or ingatherings. "They that sow in tears, shall reap in joy" (Ps. 126: 5), is a promise abundantly realized, however, in the crowning success of the following year.

With the year 1805 a new era opened in the work of **Albright.** The ranks of his little ministerial band were weakened by the retirement of **Abraham Leeser** during the winter. This faithful man of God had broken his health in his few itinerant years, and passed to his reward during the summer of 1805. Great as was this loss to the work, it was fully compensated by the appearance on the field of one destined to be the strongest factor in the ministry of **Albright,** as also his immediate successor. The new accession was **George Miller,** one of the notable trophies of **Albright's** early ministry. In a previous chapter the reader will note the part this brother took in the formulative period of the work. He was the best equipped for the ministry of any hitherto engaged.

Miller's Successful Labors.—In the month of April, 1805, **Miller** was assigned by **Albright** to labor in Lancaster, Lebanon, and Dauphin Counties. As may be seen in a previous connection, the Evangelical work was already established in this region, but no organizations had been effected. Soon after **Miller's** appointment occurred an incident of far-reaching importance. In West Cocalico Township, Lancaster County, near the line of Lebanon, he was entertained by **Father Lesher** and was given permission to preach in his house. This was only a few miles from the Reformed church on the Muehlbach (Mill Creek), where the **Leshers, Brickers, Beckers,**[3] **Lefflers,** and others who after-

3 The Beckers were the children of John George Becker, who settled in the Muehlbach prior to 1740. He died prior to 1800, aged 92 years. In 1767 he built a large stone mansion, still standing in good condition.

wards became Evangelical pillars, were members. Some of these people attended the services of **Miller** at **Lesher's**, with the result that a great work of grace was begun in this community. The **Beckers**, especially, were well-to-do and of high standing in their church, **Samuel** being a deacon. The revival that attended this work was the most extensive that had hitherto occurred in the Albright Connection, and a class was organized, including the following heads of families: **John Lesher** and his family; the brothers **George, Samuel, John Jacob, Frederick,** and **Michael Becker**, all heads of families; also **John Leffler** and wife, **Julianna**; **Fred Kissinger** and wife, **Barbara**; **Mrs. Leffler** and **Mrs. Kissinger** were sisters to the **Beckers**, also **Christena Becker**, another sister, who later married **Rev. John Walter, Albright's** first assistant; then also **Jacob Gleim, Jacob Bricker, John Grumbein,** and the **Zentmayer** family from the vicinity of Shafferstown some miles west. Of the foregoing, **Michael Becker** lived in Dauphin, and **John Jacob Becker** in York County, where their homes became centres of Evangelical influence. In Cocalico, Lancaster County, and not far from **Father Lesher**, lived the **Wengers.** Several of this name opened their homes as preaching places. On one occasion, as **Albright** preached in the house of **John Wenger** the floor gave way because of the great crowd.

In the vicinity of Lebanon, **Miller** preached at the homes of **Jacob** and **Henry Eby.** At the home of the latter the first formal ordination took place, in 1809;[4] also preached on the streets of Lebanon, but without any immediate success. He also organized a class in Bern Township, Berks County, where the work was begun several years previous. Likewise at Jonestown and Fishing Creek Valley, where **Albright** had sown the good seed of the gospel.

In this house Albright held his first conference in 1807. Samuel Becker was killed in 1809; Michael Becker, of Dauphin County, died 1818; John Jacob, of York County, was born 1757, died 1822; George, at whose house Albright died, was born 1767, died 1855; Frederick, the youngest son, died in Ohio. Jacob Bricker died 1840, aged 73 years. Jacob Gleim died 1837, aged 71 years. John Grumbein died 1868, aged 90 years.

4 Vide, "Evangelical Annals," p. 45.

In the fall of this year a great general meeting was held at **Michael Becker's,** in Hanover Township, Dauphin County, attended by **Albright, Walter,** and **Miller.** The meetings were held in the orchard, and were attended by great multitudes. **Albright** and **Walter** preached with great power and many conversions occurred. Here **Miller** also formed a class. During this year **Jamison** was employed in the eastern part of the work and **Walter** on the new circuit, while **Albright** had the supervision of the whole and consequently labored harder than any of the others.

We have already noted **Albright's** beginnings in Penns Valley, Centre County. In 1805 occurred a most important event at Millheim, in the heart of that valley. Many new homes were opened for the preaching of the gospel. Hitherto **Albright** had preached near the town, but now a Methodist brother in the town, **Paul Bachman,** opened his doors to the evangelists.

Some miles north of Millheim, in Brush Valley, lived a well-to-do man named **Christopher Spangler.** Meeting him one day, **Bachman** invited him to come over to his house and hear **Albright** preach. At the time appointed **Spangler** went to the service and was so well pleased that he invited **Albright** to come over to Brush Valley and preach at his house. He had just completed a large stone mansion, which is still standing. This fine home now became an Evangelical sanctuary, and the work spread in all directions.

The Open Door at New Berlin.—In the spring of this year (1805), **Albright,** in company with **Walter** and **Miller,** held a number of big meetings on the new circuit. The places visited were Penns, Buffalo, and Dry Valleys. One of the meetings was held in the St. Elias church, at Mifflinburg, where **Albright** preached with extraordinary power, as narrated in another connection. On the Monday following this meeting the evangelists dined at the house of **Michael Maize,** near New Berlin. During this visit **Albright** requested **Maize** to secure the school house at New Berlin for **Walter** to preach in. Permission was secured and **Walter** preached there for some time unmolested. Opposition, however, broke out, and late in the fall, upon the arrival of **Walter** to fill his appointment, he found the door barred against

him. The evening was calm and beautiful, and the moon shining brightly. The concourse of people was large, from the fact that it was known that the door would be closed against **Walter.** The undaunted evangelist, however, took a position on a large, flat stone that served as a step to the entrance. **Mr. Maize** was by his side, and on the stone sat his wife, **Barbara,** holding her six months' old babe in her arms. Their daughter, **Barbara,** five years of age, also sat by her side. **Walter** opened the service in regular form, with song and prayer, after which he delivered an address of marvellous eloquence and power. In the midst of an eloquent outburst he exclaimed, *"God has opened for Himself a door in New Berlin, and He will build up His work here in spite of the opposition of hell and wicked men."* As he said this the people were startled to hear a clanging sound inside, and to see the door, which had been secured within by a cross bar, flung open as by hands unseen. This account the author first heard in his youth, from the lips of aged ministers, but gave it little credence. But in 1868 he formed the acquaintance of her who had been present as a babe held in her mother's arms, and who was then the widow of **Rev. James Barber,** an Evangelical minister; also her older sister, **Barbara,** then the wife of the venerable **John Rank, Esq.** From the latter as an eye witness the facts relating to the meeting in St. Elias church were obtained and from his companion were obtained the facts relating to the visit of the evangelists at her father's house, and also the incident of the opening door. The author also met several other persons who were present at the time of the strange occurrence. All the old ministers and members regarded it as miraculous. The reader may draw his own conclusions, with the following indubitable facts to help him:

The prophecy of the evangelist was literally and directly fulfilled. (1) The sermon was followed by a revival and a class was formed in less than a year. (2) The first church edifice of **Albright's** following was erected in 1816 within a short distance of where that sermon was preached. (3) The first Publishing House of the denomination was started there in 1815, and remained until 1854, when it was removed to Cleveland, Ohio. (4) *Der Christliche Botschafter,* the German organ of the

Church, was first printed in this establishment (1836-1854), and later attained the largest circulation of any German religious periodical in the world. (5) The General Missionary Society of the Church was organized within an hour's ride of that place in 1836. (6) Union Seminary (later enlarged to Central Pennsylvania College), the first permanent institution of learning of the Church, was founded there in 1854. Not the least remarkable is the additional fact, that the little babe which her mother clutched to her bosom as she sprang to her feet when the door of the school house flew open, lived to see all these great providential unfoldings, and after sharing for nearly half a century the hardships of an Evangelical itinerant preacher, educated her younger children in this first seminary, and in death was laid to rest quite near her parents.

Thus we see that New Berlin was for nearly half a century the headquarters of the Evangelical Association, and the manner in which the prophecy of the evangelist was fulfilled, must ever remain a marvel and a theme of thanksgiving and praise to all who read the history of the Church.

The Franklin Circuit.—Although this circuit was not formed until 1810, it was nevertheless considered a separate field as early as 1807, when **Rev. Jacob Fry** was sent to serve it, but who after a few months' service, was silenced by **Albright** for a misdemeanor. The name "Franklin" was derived from Franklin County, in which some of the most important appointments were located. It embraced all the Evangelical work west of the Susquehanna River and south of the Juniata River, westward into Maryland and Virginia. The foundations of this work were laid by **Albright** prior to 1800, but developed more slowly than any other part of his great field.

As we take a survey of this field we note that all the places named, save one, are still Evangelical, notably York and Johnstown, which places are Evangelical strongholds. Beginning in the East, we note York County, which now has more Evangelical churches than any other in the entire connection. In Windsor Township **Albright** and colleagues preached at the home of **John Jacob Becker,** who, as we have seen, was a member of the family of that name in Lebanon County. At Frysville, near **Becker's,**

was another preaching place where a class was formed in 1810. West of this they preached in the court house at York, the county seat. This was a historic building. It was there that the Continental Congress reassembled when it fled from Philadelphia, during the British invasion in 1777 and 1778. Some of the greatest events in the history of the Revolution occurred in this edifice. It is a noteworthy fact that the Evangelical preachers continued to preach in this town over thirty years without an organization. There are now (1917) eight Evangelical churches in the place.

Northwest of York, in the vicinity of Mount Royal, **Walter** had a great revival in 1810. We regard it certain, for many reasons, that **Jacob Albright** also preached in this region. Here lived the **Rev. Adam Ettinger,**[5] a Reformed evangelist and associate of **Rev. Anthony Houtz,** under whose preaching **Albright** was converted, and **Rev. William Otterbein,** founder of the United Brethren Church. **Ettinger** never withdrew from the Reformed Church, but was considered a leader in the evangelistic movement with which both the work of **Otterbein** and **Albright** stood so vitally connected, and from which much of their following was subsequently gathered.

As early as 1800 the "Roller" school house near **Ettinger's,** and the home of **Christian Myers,** near the Conewago, were centres of evangelistic influence. At the home of the latter, **Bishop Newcomer** preached in 1800, and **John Walter, Albright's** assistant, soon afterwards. **Myers** early identified himself with the work of the Evangelicals, and it was here that the widow of **Rev. Adam Ettinger** and her son, **Adam, Jr.,** identified themselves with the Evangelicals in 1810.

5 Rev. Adam Ettinger was born Nov. 19, 1760, and died July 26, 1809. For some years he had a regular charge of the Reformed Church, but owing to his evangelistic work, which his denomination at that day failed to conserve properly, the fruits of his labors were gathered by others. His wife, Anna, a sister to Rev. J. Stouch, a noted Lutheran missionary and evangelist, was a woman of great intelligence and piety. She and her entire family became Evangelicals in 1810. She died 1842, aged 76 years. Two of their sons became Evangelical preachers—Adam, Jr., and Benjamin, both in 1816. Adam was a very learned man, and was the first editor of "Der Christliche Botschafter." He died in York, Pa., in 1877, aged 90 years. He was the grandfather of Rev. Jesse Ettinger, of the Central Pa. Conference.

Due west of Mount Royal about twenty-five miles, at Bendersville, Adams County, was an early Evangelical centre where a class was formed in 1811.

Crossing the South Mountain from this point, the Cumberland Valley is reached. Here, near the line of Cumberland and Franklin Counties, is a place once known as "The Pines." This was an Evangelical preaching place in 1803, and doubtless earlier. The chief preaching place was at **Abraham Buchman's.** Also the families **Kanaga, Vandersall,** and **Helm.** A class was formed here in 1811, which was strong and influential.

Over thirty miles southwest from The Pines is Little Cove, in Franklin County, near Mercersburg. Here all our first Evangelical preachers held forth at the house of **George Eisenberger,** whose son, **John,** became an Evangelical minister in 1821. This is the only place mentioned on the old Franklin Circuit where the Evangelical work has ceased.

Proceeding southward to the border of Franklin County, and extending into Maryland, we reach a settlement of people who had come thither from Lancaster and Lebanon Counties. Among them were the brothers **Jacob** and **Joseph Wenger** and their brother-in-law, **Henry Kummler;** also **Leonard Middlekauff** and **J. Strock,** and others. Some of these people had been acquainted with **Albright** before their removal hither. **Bishop Newcomer** held big meetings at **Middlekauff's** in 1802 and later. It seems that both the Evangelicals and United Brethren held meetings here in common. In 1810 an Evangelical class was formed here, and the United Brethren evidently lost their hold in the community because of their opposition to organization, as elsewhere stated. At the house of **Henry Kummler** there was held in 1817, the "Social Conference," composed of delegates from both the Evangelicals and the United Brethren, to effect a union of the two denominations.[6] **Henry Kummler** later removed to Ohio and was made a Bishop of the United Brethren Church.

About fifteen miles south of this locality (State line), our early evangelists crossed the Potomac River into (Old) Virginia and pushed up the Shenandoah Valley. Long before the Civil War

6 See "Evangelical Annals," p. 172

there were many Evangelical fields of labor established in that state, but owing to the anti-slavery tenets of the Evangelical Association, the work was almost wholly destroyed by that conflict. Only one of the original preaching places abides—the Snyder appointment, a few miles from Cherry Run, West Virginia. Here **Albright** and co-laborers are known to have preached at the home of **G. Snyder,** in 1806.

Crossing the Blue Mountains we reach Bedford County, Pa. In Morrison's Cove, in this county, was a large settlement of Germans from the eastern part of the state. In this region **Albright** and his associates gained entrance prior to 1804. The appointments were near the present town of New Enterprise, at the homes of **George** and **Jacob Stull, Henry Schnebley, George Kring, J. Lyons,** and **Philip Muhleisen** (now Milliron). South of this, on Wills Creek, near Hyndman, they preached at the home of **John Wilhelm. George Miller,** who was appointed to the New (Northumberland) Circuit in 1806, says in his journal that he left the work in Morrison's Cove unsupplied, because of its distance. The work was nevertheless continued by **Albright** and **Walter.**

About 1806 **George Kring** and **Jacob Stull** moved westward across the mountains into Cambria County. **Kring** located at Elton, about ten miles east of Johnstown, and **Stull** located about three miles away. They were visited this same year by the Evangelical preachers and the locality has been Evangelical ground ever since.[7]

In 1807 **John Walter** took up an appointment at the house of **Nicholas Varner,** on the Frankstown road, four miles east of Johnstown. In 1807 **Albright** spent some time in this region, preaching at **Kring's, Stull's,** and **Varner's.** During this tour he also visited **Peter Levergood,** the founder of Johnstown. In concluding this general survey of the evangelistic field of **Rev. Jacob Albright** and his coworkers, we are impressed with its vast extent. Almost daily in the saddle, from morning till night;

7 George Kring died in 1844, aged 78 years; his son, Conrad Kring, born 1800, died 1887, entered the Evangelical ministry in 1823. Jacob Stull was the grandfather of Rev. John Stull, many years a prominent member of the Ohio Conference.

fording streams and rivers at all seasons; preaching at night to crowded houses is it any wonder that **Albright** and his colleagues, **Leeser, Miller** and **Walter**, all died of consumption in the prime of life?

The Breitenstein Class.—During the period under consideration (1804-1805), **Albright** and his associates also gained entrance in other places not noted hitherto, where organizations were effected subsequently. In the early part of his ministry **Albright** formed the acquaintance of **Philip Breitenstein,**[8] a prominent man who lived near Adamstown, Lancaster County, Soon after 1800 **Breitenstein** purchased a farm three miles southwest of Lebanon, to which he removed. In 1805 **Albright** was given permission to preach in his house, but **Breitenstein** did not give his personal adherence to the cause of the evangelist for several years. About this same time appointments were taken up at the homes of **Jacob** and **Henry Eby** and **Samuel Bein,** who lived in the same vicinity. A class was formed here in 1808, which for over a half century was called the Breitenstein class. Several events of great moment to the work of **Albright** occurred in this class.

In April, 1809, at the second conference, the ordination of a number of ministers was agreed upon, but was deferred for various reasons, which made the holding of a mid-year semi-official meeting necessary. At the aforenamed conference **George Miller,** the successor of **Albright,** had presented for approval the text of the first book of Discipline which he had prepared. The conference adopted it and directed **Miller** to publish it. In the summer of 1809 a general meeting was held at the house of **Henry Eby,** near Lebanon, which was attended by all the ministers in the traveling connection. The book of Discipline was now printed and ready for delivery. More important than all else, the deferred work of the conference was completed by or-

8 For an interesting account of the Breitenstein family, see "Evangelical Annals," p. 42. Philip Breitenstein was born 1764, and died 1838; he was a local preacher many years; his son, John Breitenstein, was born 1795, and died 1878; he entered the active ministry in 1818. Jacob Eby died in 1838, aged 64 years; Henry Eby died 1863, aged 81 years; Samuel Bien died in Ohio, in 1852, aged 78 years.

daining to the office of elder, **George Miller, John Walter,** and **John Dreisbach.** This was the first formal ordination in the Evangelical denomination. Besides this important event, the Breitenstein class had the honor of having the third Evangelical camp-meeting within its bounds in June, 1811, at **Breitenstein's.**

The Evangelical work spread considerably at other points of the old circuit. On the Conestoga, in Lancaster County, preaching was established at the homes of **Philip Herman, Henry Wertz,** and also in Manor Township in the homes of **David Williams** and **Henry Manderbach.** At Mt. Joy, **Samuel Lehn**[9] opened his home in 1804, where a class was formed prior to 1808. In 1809 **John Seybert,**[10] who became the first bishop of the Evangelical Association, was class leader.

Near the present town of Orwigsburg, in Schuylkill County, lived **George Orwig,**[11] a pious member of the Reformed Church, who opened his home as a preaching place for **Albright.** In 1811 he removed to Buffalo Valley, Union County. His descendants became prominent in the Evangelical Church, especially **Rev. W. W. Orwig,** as editor, author and bishop.

In Lower Mahantongo Valley, west of Orwigsburg, **Albright** established a preaching place at **John Haldeman's.**

9 Samuel Lehn died in 1854, aged 82 years; his son, Rev. Michael Lehn, was for many years a prominent minister of the Church.

10 Rev. John Seybert was the son of Henry Seybert, a Hessian soldier of the Revolution. He was born in Lancaster County in 1791; entered the ministry in 1819; elected presiding elder, 1825; bishop in 1839; died at Flat Rock, Ohio, Jan. 4, 1860. He was never married.

11 George Orwig was a son of Gotfried Orwig, who came from Germany to Pennsylvania. He died in Union County, 1841, aged 83 years, and was buried in the St. Elias' graveyard, at Mifflinburg. Bishop William W. Orwig, a grandson of George Orwig, was born 1810; entered the ministry in 1828; presiding elder, 1833; general publishing agent and editor of "Der Christliche Botschafter," 1839; in the pastorate, 1844-48; editor *Christliche Botschafter,* 1849; president of Union Seminary, 1856-59; bishop, 1859-63; editor *Christliche Botschafter,* 1863-67; general publisher, 1867-69; later presiding elder and pastor in the Erie Conference; author of several valuable books; died at Cleveland, Ohio, May 29, 1889. Gotfried Orwig was born in 1719, and his wife, Gloria Lampert, in 1713. They emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1741. The town of Orwigsburg perpetuates the family name.

CHAPTER VII.

Gathering the Harvest.

The Second General Assembly—Union Pentecostal meetings—Miller's continued great success—The organizations—The North Branch Valley—The Dreisbach church—Far-reaching results.

THE year 1806 marks an epoch in the history of **Albright's** work. It was a year of bountiful ingathering of a harvest sown in tears and sorrow. In the previous chapter we noted the many organizations effected by **George Miller** on the old circuit. In this we shall see him meet with far greater success on the new circuit and almost double the entire membership of the connection within a year. But before we proceed with the narrative of his labors we note the second deliberative assembly held by **Albright.**

The Second General Assembly.—Although there is no account of such an assembly in our earlier histories, it is nevertheless a fact learned from the nature of the written records as well as tradition, that such an assembly was held. The place of meeting was at the house of **George Becker,** near Shafferstown, Lebanon County. The record itself, as well as the business recorded, shows the work of a deliberative assembly.

1. The contributions for salary were equally divided between the four ministers, **Albright, Walter, Jamison** and **Miller.**

2. An additional allowance was made to **Jamison,** who seems to have been dissatisfied.

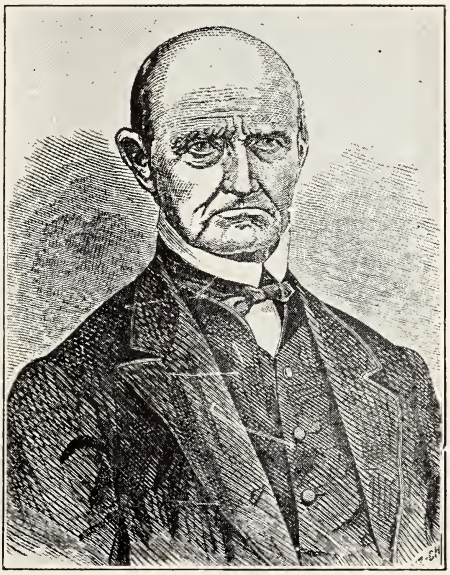
3. In consequence of this, it was decided that hereafter no one shall be taken into the ministry who will not be satisfied with his proportionate share of the salary.

4. A new fund was created, called the "Briefschaft-steuer," which was a subsidiary, or contingent fund.

5. The office of "local preacher" was established, and **Charles Bisse, Solomon Miller,** and **Jacob Phillips** were licensed as such.

6. The preachers were given regular licenses.

7. It was resolved that hereafter yearly conferences be held.



J. DREISBACH.

The reader will agree that these items, numbered consecutively and taken from the official record of that year, bear the marks of having been the result of deliberation in assembly.[1] From the fact that **Miller** received his appointment on May 25th, for the new circuit, and an incident which the **Becker** family say happened at this assembly, we infer that it was held on the date named.

Union Pentecostal Meetings.[2]—From the journals of **Bishop Newcomer,** of the United Brethren, and **George Miller,** of the Evangelical Church, we learn that union meetings were held by the preachers of these bodies. **Miller** says in his journal that he received his appointment to the new circuit from **Albright** on May 25 (1806), but before starting for his field he attended such a meeting near Lancaster. A reference to **Bishop Newcomer's** journal shows that this meeting was held at the home of **Christian Hershey,** and began on Saturday, May 30th. It was attended by many ministers. **Newcomer** records that the first sermon was preached on Saturday by **J. Neidig,** and the second by **Jacob Albright.** Both preached with great power. On Sunday morning **Newcomer** preached from the words, "O that Thou wouldst bless me indeed" (1 Chron. 4: 10). On Monday, June 2d, they had love feast which was "a real pentecost." Over the following Sunday, June 7th-8th, a similar meeting was held at **J. Shelly's,** also in Lancaster County. Many ministers were present, including **Newcomer** and **Bishop Boehm; Jacob Al-**

1 In the absence of an express statement in the early records that such an assembly was held, and inasmuch as the survivors of the several Becker families uniformly declared that such an assembly was held, Rev. William Hoffman, whose wife was a granddaughter of George Becker, many years ago made a thorough investigation. Two daughters of Becker were then living, both of whom remembered the assembly at their father's house very well, and related a number of occurrences. These ladies were Mrs. Rev. Kleinfelter, Hoffman's mother-in-law, and her sister, Mrs. Gockley. The former was grown and her sister was eleven years of age at the time. They did not confuse this meeting with the first conference held the year following at Samuel Becker's. Moreover, the author, many years ago, interviewed Mrs. Elizabeth Stump, daughter of Samuel Becker, and Mrs. Esther Shutt, daughter of John Becker, and both assured him that such a meeting was held.

2 See Newcomer's Journal, p. 147; "Albright and Miller," pp. 106, 107.

bright also was present and participated. **Bishop Newcomer,** in other entries in his journal, notes the participation of "The Albright Brethren" in his big meetings. The fact of the Albright Brethren coöperating with the United Brethren in that early day, without ecclesiastical union, will be understood when considered in relation to **Albright** and the United Brethren as set forth in another connection in this work.

Miller's Great Success.—Immediately after the union meeting at **Hershey's, Miller** started for his new field of labor, the New or Northumberland circuit. On Monday evening, June 2d, he preached with great power at **Michael Becker's,** in Dauphin County, from the words, *"The just shall live by faith"* (Rom. 1:17). The sermon was blessed in the conversion of souls. Soon after entering upon his labors on this vast field, which extended from the North Branch of the Susquehanna on the east to the Potomac River in the southwest, he wisely cut off the appointments beyond the Alleghenies in Bedford and other counties, and concentrated his efforts on the central portion of the field. This enabled him to preach more frequently at all the places, with immediate good results. Others had faithfully sown the good seed of the kingdom, but the work needed the steady and tactful hand of **Miller** to effect organizations. Two classes had been organized, as stated in a previous connection, in 1803. These, the one in Pfoutz Valley, in Juniata County, and the Thomas class in Mifflin County, we may pass by. We are unable to give the formation of the many classes on this charge this year, in the order of their organization, except in the case of New Berlin, which was the first.

New Berlin.—In the previous chapter we gave an account of the way in which the Evangelical work was introduced into this place, and also the marvellous preaching of **John Walter,** and his prophecy regarding the future of the church here. The first step in the fulfilment of his words was the organization of a class in less than a year, with **Michael Maize**[3] as class leader. As already stated, the first church of the Evangelical Association was

3 Michael Maize was born near Shafferstown, Lebanon County, in 1770, and died in 1842. He was made a local preacher at an early day. His wife, Barbara, died in 1848, aged 72 years.

erected here in 1816, and in this church, so historic and memorable, the author of this work was converted in his youth, and in the course of years preached his first sermon from the pulpit where the worthy fathers stood long before him. Did space permit, we would be glad to record more of the incidents of the early days, as told us by trembling lips long stilled in death, but we must pass on.

The Eyer Class.—We have already noted the home of **Abraham Eyer**[4] as a preaching place for **Newcomer** and others, as early as 1800. This home is at Winfield on the Susquehanna River. It was here that **Henry Niebel,** who was preparing for the ministry of the Reformed Church, identified himself with the Evangelical work and began his long ministerial career by assisting **Miller** in 1806. In the barn of **Father Eyer** the ninth annual conference was held in 1816, at which time the first missionaries were appointed to go to Ohio, and also the holding of the first General Conference was determined on.

The Middle Creek Class was formed in the vicinity of Middleburg, the county seat of Snyder County, about ten miles south of New Berlin. This was the strongest class organized, consisting of over thirty members. The preaching places were at the homes of **Abraham Fry, John Walter, John Adam Bowersox, Jacob Bordner, Daniel Mowerer** and **George Hartman.** The latter two were married to sisters of **Fry. John Walter, Jr.,** was the class leader. From this class came many ministers, among the first being **Jacob Fry** (1807), brother of **Abraham;**

4 Abraham Eyer was born in Lancaster County in 1748, and died in 1823. His wife, Catharine, *nee* Graybill, was born in York County in 1752, and died in 1805. They were married in 1770 and had children as follows: Catharine, married Rev. John Dreisbach, Albright's co-laborer, in 1811; she died in 1815, and two years later he married her sister Fanny; Barbara, married Rev. David Shellenberger; Mary, married Rev. Henry Niebel; Magdalena (Molly), married Daniel Hoy, and they removed to Ohio, where their daughter, Catharine, became the wife of Bishop Jos. Long; Elisabeth, married Philip Hoy, brother to Daniel, and they also moved to Ohio; Anna, married Martin Dreisbach (Ohio). Besides these Father Eyer had three sons, of whom Isaac, born 1793, died 1879, was for many years a pillar in the Evangelical Church. The author is greatly indebted to him for many facts given in this work.

John Walter, Jr. (1813), **Michael Walter** (1814), and **John Stambaugh** (1813).

Beaver Dam.—This is now Beaver Springs, Snyder County. **Miller** records that he had good success here, and inasmuch as **Albright, Walter** and others had preached here for several years, we are of the opinion that **Miller** also formed a class here, since we certainly know that there was one a year or so later.

Chapman Township.—Miller formed a class in Chapman Township, Snyder County, near the present town of Port Trevorton, of which the families **Swartz, Shelly, Shetterly,** and **Thornton** were the chief members.

Derrstown.—A class was formed in Lewisburg, on the Susquehanna River, in Buffalo Valley, five miles north of Winfield. The leader of this class was **Christian Wolfe,**[5] whose wife was an aunt of **Rev. John Dreisbach. Wolfe** was early licensed as a local preacher. Prior to 1809 he removed to Seneca Falls, New York, and through him the Evangelical work was established in that state in 1812.

The Dreisbach Class.—This society was formed at the Dreisbach church, five miles west of Lewisburg. Because of its importance a fuller account of the work will be given later.

The Motz Settlements.—Miller fails to say whether he formed a class in the lower end of Penns Valley, in Centre County. In the previous chapter we noted how the evangelists gained entrance here with **Captain Motz** and his son-in-law, **John Wise,**[6] and others. This was the strongest Evangelical centre in Penns Valley and quite separate from Millheim, which was over seven miles west. **Miller** had a gracious revival in the Motz settlement (Woodward), in 1806, at which time two notable heads of families, namely **Jacob Merk** and **John Adam Hennig,** were

5 Rev. Christian Wolfe was one of the first local preachers; ordained a deacon in 1821; served in 1825 as an itinerant; died in 1833, aged 54 years. His wife, Barbara, *nee* Dreisbach, died in 1838, aged 59 years.

6 John Wise died in 1844, aged 79 years; his wife, Eve, *nee* Metz, died 1855, aged 83 years. Jacob Merk died 1837, aged 72 years. John Adam Hennig was born in Berks County, 1757, and died in 1839, aged 82 years. He was the son of John Jacob Hennig and wife, Anna. They were pioneers in the West Branch Valley, and prominent in the Revolution. Adam Hennig, the missionary, was born in 1794, and died in Ohio in 1860.

brought into the Evangelical fold. These meetings were held at the house of **John Wise,** the first class-leader. It is clear that the class was organized either by **Miller,** or in the year previous (1805), by **Walter,** or **Albright** himself.

Among the many prominent members here, **John Adam Hennig** calls for special mention. He was a soldier of the Revolution, as were also his father and his brothers. His son **Adam** entered the Evangelical ministry in 1813, and in 1816 he and **Rev. Fred Shower** were the first Evangelical missionaries sent to Ohio. In 1830 the fourth General Conference was held at the house of **John Adam Hennig.** This building is still standing (1916).

Milheim.—Over seven miles west of Woodward is Milheim, a notable place in the early history of the Evangelical Church. The preaching places were in the homes of **George Swartz** (1803); **Abraham Ream,** at Greengrove (1802); **Paul Bachman** in Milheim. In 1806 **Miller** had a considerable ingathering in this locality. Among the families who at this time identified themselves with the Evangelical work were **Henry Smith** and his brother **Peter.** At the home of the former the evangelists preached as early as 1804, also in that of **David Merk,** at Greengrove, which was for many years an Evangelical place of worship. The most notable trophies of the revival at Milheim (1806), were the brothers **John** and **Mathias Betz.**[7] The former was made a local preacher at an early day, and prior to 1816 removed to Ohio, where he was a pioneer and pillar in the Evangelical work. The latter began to exercise in the ministry soon after his conversion, and in 1809 entered the active ministry. He was a young man of great promise. When preaching his valedictory as pastor on Lancaster Circuit, April 15, 1810, a young man was converted who, next to **Albright,** is the most notable personage in the history of the Evangelical Church, namely **Bishop John Seybert.**

7 Rev. Mathias Betz was born in 1782, and died of pneumonia at the home of J. Steffy, about twelve miles west of Milheim, in 1813. He was preacher-in-charge of Northumberland Circuit at the time of his death. Rev John Betz was born in 1780. and died at Betzville, Ohio, in 1848. He was the founder of this town.

In 1839 the General Conference of the Church was held in the Musser church, four miles west of Millheim. At this conference **Seybert** was elected as the first regular bishop of the Evangelical Association. It is worthy of note, as showing the importance of the Evangelical work in this beautiful Penns Valley, that two General Conferences were held in it within a decade.

Brush Valley.—In the former chapter we noted the reception of **Albright,** in 1805, by **Christopher Spangler,** of Brush Valley. Here **Miller** also organized a class in 1806. In another connection the reader will find a further notice of **Spangler** as a co-laborer with **Albright.**

The North Branch Valley.—The foundations of the Evangelical work in the valley of the North Branch of the Susquehanna River were undoubtedly laid by **Albright** himself. No date of beginning can be given, except that visitations were made in 1806, and in 1807 the region was embraced in the Northumberland Circuit. Both the beginning and development of the work, which now embraces nearly a score of separate charges, well illustrates the far-reaching influence for good of a godly father whose house is a sanctuary, and whose children are saved for God and nurtured at the family shrine. The facts we herewith give stand as a testimony of God's faithfulness and the manner in which He honors parental influence through many generations. In a previous connection, when noting how that good man, **Leonard Zimmerman,**[8] of Schuylkill County, opened his house as a preaching place for **Albright,** amid much opposition and persecution, he gave promise of a further notice of his family. We have now reached that point.

The **Zimmerman** family consisted of himself and wife, **Sophia,** two sons, **John** and **Leonard, Jr.,** and seven daughters. Nearly all of these children were married and heads of families in **Albright's** time. **John Zimmerman** was a justice of the peace in Schuylkill County, and his house was one of the first preach-

8 Rev. Leonard Zimmerman was born in 1783, and died at Manheim, Pa., in 1840. He spent ten years in the active ministry and was a preacher of more than ordinary ability. John George Zehner and his wife both died in 1848, aged 83 and 80 years, respectively. Michael Seybert died 1852, aged 85 years, and his wife died 1854, aged 84 years.

ing places. **Leonard** was converted in his father's house in 1802, under the preaching of **Albright** from the text, *"But who may abide the day of His coming?"* (Mal. 3:2). He entered the active ministry of the Church in 1811. The daughters of **Father Zimmerman** married as follows: **Maria** and **Eve** married the brothers **John** and **Michael Seybert**, respectively, and **Catharine** married **John George Zehner.** These three families, soon after 1800, removed to Summer Hill, near Berwick, on the line of Columbia and Luzerne Counties. About 1806 they were followed to the valley by three more sons-in-law of **Zimmerman**, namely **Conrad Biebelheimer**, who had married **Susan**; **Jacob Bachart**, married to **Albertena**, and **H. Balliet**, married to **Barbara. Bachart** located near Danville, Montour County. The homes of all the foregoing were preaching places. **Balliet** and **Biebelheimer** later removed to the West, where their homes became new centres of Evangelical influence.

The first general revival in this region took place in 1811, under the labors of **Rev. Leonard Zimmerman,** when two classes were formed, one at **Bachart's**, near Danville, and the other at Summer Hill. Among the direct results of the work at Summer Hill are the three flourishing congregations in Berwick, besides many more in the vicinity. Many able ministers, descendants of **Father Zimmerman,** have gone forth with the gospel message from Summer Hill. Among the descendants who have been an honor to the Church was the late **Rev. Isaiah Bower,** of Berwick, through whom the first Evangelical church was built in that place and through whose munificence also was built the magnificent "Bower Memorial Church" as a lasting tribute to his sterling worth as a Christian citizen. It remains for us to add that **Margaret**, the youngest child of **Father Zimmerman,** was married in 1818 to **George Miller,**[9] the first printer of the Evangelical Association.

9 George Miller in 1815 was providentially led to take charge of the newly established printery of the Evangelical Association. He printed all the early publications of the Church—Discipline, hymn book, catechism, New Testament, etc. He was a tower of strength to the infant Church. He was no relative of the ministers of his name. He died at New Berlin, Pa., 1859, aged 64 years. His wife, Margaret, died 1845, aged 55 years.

The Evangelical Work at Dreisbach's.—We now recur to the Dreisbach church, where, in 1805, **Miller** organized the most influential class of the connection in **Albright's** time. We give a somewhat extended account of this place, for the reason that it was the centre of an evangelistic movement (chiefly among the Reformed people), in the West Branch Valley, and the further fact that **Albright** and his colleagues seem to have entered into the spirit of the movement more fully than any others, and were providentially permitted to gather a rich fruitage, not only of their own sowing, but that of others as well.

When we say that nearly all the men of influence who opened their homes as preaching places for the early evangelists in this region, afterwards fell in with the work of **Albright** and became the pillars of the new circuit, the reader will see the reason for the details herewith given.

The Dreisbach church was the first German church in Pennsylvania, north of Sunbury. It was founded in 1787, by the grant of seven acres of land for that purpose by **Martin Dreisbach, Sr.** The first edifice was of logs and was occupied by the Lutherans and the Reformed jointly, the latter predominating. Among the first settlers of this (Buffalo) valley, in 1773, were **Martin Dreisbach, Sr., John Aurand, Sr., Philip Hoy, Sr.,** all of them members of the Reformed Church. After the Revolution many more Reformed people from the lower counties located here, among them being the **Niebel, Betz, Frederick, Barnhart** and **Youngman** families, also **George Wendel Wolfe,** a Lutheran.

Prior to 1800 **Elias Youngman** laid out a town called "Youngmanstown" (now Mifflinburg), where through him was built and named in his honor the noted St. Elias church, where the evangelists **Newcomer, Albright, Walter** and **Miller** sowed the seed of the kingdom with many tears. It should be borne in mind that these families named were of the Pietistic type and favorable to evangelistic measures. The Lutheran element was of an opposite type, and hence the Evangelical cause gained very little from that denomination.

The first Reformed minister was **Rev. Jonathan Rawhouser,** who remained until 1792, when he was succeeded by **Rev. J. G.**

Pfrimmer, who arrived from Europe in 1788. He was of the Pietistic and evangelistic type, and for this reason was termed an "irregular," and was not connected with the Reformed Synod. **Pfrimmer** preached in an evangelistic manner in many places. He stood in intimate relationship with **Rev. William Otterbein**, of the same Church, and with him was one of the founders of the United Brethren Church. Like **Otterbein**, his connection with the Reformed Church was only official, as after 1791 till his death he was a strong factor in the United Brethren movement.

Through **Pfrimmer** the Reformed element of the Dreisbach church came in touch with the leading spirits of the United Brethren movement. In 1795 we find **Christian Newcomer** and **George Adam Gueting**, both quite prominent in that movement, making a tour of this region and finding entrance at all the points of **Pfrimmer's** labors. The latter had left the field and labored elsewhere. The Reformed people of this region were now without a pastor, except as they were served by the United Brethren evangelists who came at irregular intervals.

In October, 1800, the United Brethren had their first "big" or "Pentecostal" meeting at Dreisbach's. The ministers present were **Newcomer, Pfrimmer, Gueting** and **Snyder.** Multitudes of people (Reformed Pietists) participated. A new element now appears. One of the members of the Dreisbach congregation was **Dietrich Aurand,** son of **John Aurand.** He had accompanied the evangelists on their tours and had exercised the gift of preaching. In 1801, the people being without a pastor and desirous of remaining loyal to the Reformed Church, recommended **Aurand** for license to preach. This the synod refused to grant. Men of his type were not then in favor with that body. He was nevertheless elected as pastor and served them as such several years. **Aurand's** name now, for several sessions of the United Brethren conference, appears on the roll of that body. For some years the leaders of the United Brethren Church continued to visit this region and hold big meetings. The people however remained in the Reformed communion, evidently not favoring the form of Church life represented by the United Brethren.

During this period of evident hesitancy and waiting (1802-4), the **Rev. Jacob Albright** appeared on the ground. We know

nothing of how he gained this open door of opportunity, nevertheless it is a fact that Pastor **Aurand** himself was an instrument in leading the people to the belief that **Albright** represented that form of religious life most congenial to them. We are led to this conclusion from the fact that **Aurand** opened his own home as a preaching place, not only for **Albright,** but also for his co-laborers, **Walter** and **Leeser.**[10] About this time **Aurand** ceased to coöperate with the United Brethren and in 1804 accepted a call to a Reformed congregation at Water Street, on the Juniata River. A vast evangelistic field was now evidently opened, and **Albright** and colleagues found entrance in many homes. The preaching places in this vicinity were the Dreisbach church; the house of **Martin Dreisbach,** the elder of the church; the house of **Rev. Deatrick Aurand,** and also that of his brother **John;** the house of **Philip Hoy, Sr.;** the house of **George Wendle Wolfe,** and also the St. Elias church, four miles distant. Evidently the circumstances we have narrated had something to do with the formation of the new circuit, in 1804, as from that year onward "The Albright Brethren," as they were called, seemed to be in the lead.

Although the Dreisbach church was the centre of evangelistic work for many years, the people remained loyal to their Church, nor did they find anything in the preaching of **Albright** and coworkers inconsistent with their religious belief. Thus for years did these pious people receive the ministration of men not of their own Church. Such a condition could not long continue. The situation needed the skilful hand of a **Miller** to bring it to a happy outcome. **Miller** had already organized a number of classes of just such people as were at the Dreisbach church. Over on the Middlecreek, twelve miles distant, similar conditions had prevailed, nevertheless the people had become Evangelicals.

Miller appointed a big meeting to be held at Dreisbach's over October 26-27 (1806), at which **Albright** and his eloquent colleague, **Walter,** were to be present. He also made efforts to secure the attendance of such as had lately united with the Evangelical cause. Almost the entire class from Middlecreek

10 See "Fathers of the Reformed Church," Vol. III, p. 185.
11 See "Albright and Miller," p. 114.

was present. The meeting was most successful and victorious. **Albright** and **Walter** preached with unusual freedom and power and the revival fires kindled were scattered all over the new circuit. The Dreisbach people were now led to see that their spiritual welfare lay in an Evangelical organization. A class was accordingly formed, of which the former elder of the congregation, **Martin Dreisbach, Jr.**, was made the leader. This was a triumphant climax to **Miller's** work on this circuit.

That the reader may see the far-reaching effects of the winning of this people for the Evangelical cause, we note the following: The annual conference was held three years in succession (1812-1813-1814) in the house of **Martin Dreisbach, Jr.** At the first two conferences his son, **Rev. John Dreisbach,** served as secretary, and of the third he was the president. In 1816 the first General Conference was held in the same house, and this same son, now the leader of the Evangelical Church, served as presiding elder in the house in which he was born. Remarkable circumstance! At this latter conference the infant denomination was given the name of "The Evangelical Association of North America." Moreover, as a pathetic sequel to his arduous labors in this community, the venerable hero of the cross, **Bishop Christian Newcomer,** made a last tour of this region and appeared before the conference (Oct. 13-14, 1816), in a final effort to unite the Evangelical and United Brethren denominations.[12] At the house of **J. S. Dunkle,** son-in-law of **Dreisbach,** a member of this class, the organization of the Missionary Society of the Evangelical Church was perfected in 1839.

Moreover, in the person of the youthful **John Dreisbach, Albright** found a most gifted and devoted co-laborer, providentially soon to take his place, and in him the Evangelical Church found a poet, author, founder of her printing house, editor, first presiding elder, and first advocate of a learned ministry and higher institution of learning.

Besides the **Dreisbach** family, the **Wolfe, Aurand, Hoy,** and other families bore a prominent part in the formative period of the Evangelical Church. Many of the original members at an early day removed to Ohio, and were instrumental in founding

12 See "Evangelical Annals," p. 172.

the Evangelical work in that state. Among the number were **Daniel** and **Philip Hoy**, sons of **Philip Hoy, Sr.**, and **Martin Dreisbach** (cousin of the minister). These three men were sons-in-law of **Father Eyer**, of Winfield. They removed to the West, prior to 1810. A little later they were followed by **John Buchtel** (father of the founder of Buchtel College), and some of the **Wolfe, Aurand, Wormley** and other families. Still later the two most prominent ministers of the Church also moved to Ohio, **John Dreisbach** in 1831, and **Henry Niebel** in 1833.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

DREISBACH.—Martin Dreisbach, Sr., was born in the Duchy of Witgenstein, Germany, in 1717; emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1751, locating in Berks County; in 1773 removed to farm in Buffalo Valley, in (now) Union County, where he died in 1799. He had four sons—**Henry**, who in 1804 removed to Ohio and laid out Circleville; **Jacob, John**, and **Martin, Jr.**, the latter succeeding him on the farm. He also had a number of daughters. He gave the land for the church which bears his name. He was its first elder and was succeeded by his son, **Martin, Jr.**, who was born in 1764, and died in 1831, who also had a large and influential family. His oldest son, **Rev. John Dreisbach**, was born in 1789 and died in 1871. The youngest of the family was **Hon. Martin Dreisbach**, born in 1800, died at Lewisburg, Pa., 1870.

AURAND.—John Aurand, Sr., was born near Heidelberg, Germany, in 1725. His forefathers were French Huguenots, who fled from France to Germany because of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in 1685, and the persecutions that followed the Protestants in consequence. He came to Pennsylvania in 1753 and located in Berks County. In 1772 he bought a property at the mouth of Turtle Creek in (now) Union County about seven miles east of Dreisbach's. He was a very pious man and his place a home and preaching place for all the early evangelists. He died in 1807, aged 82 years. He had a large family of sons and daughters. His sons **Henry, Jacob**, and **Dietrich**, were soldiers of the Revolution. His son, **John, Jr.**, was one of the first and strong supports of **Albright**. He died in 1809. **Rev.**

Dietrich Aurand was born in 1760, and died in 1831, buried at Water Street, Pa.

WOLFE.—George Wendel Wolfe was the son of **John George Wolfe,** of Tulpehocken, Berks County. His grandfather, **John Barnard Wolfe,** an emigrant from Germany in 1727, located there. **George Wendel Wolfe** was born in 1740 and served as a soldier of the Revolution. Prior to 1800 he purchased a large tract of land in (now) Union County and took up his residence on it. He died in 1823, aged 83 years. He had a large family of sons and daughters, most of whom were early Evangelicals. His sons, **Leonard** and **John** (the latter married to a daughter of **Father Aurand),** moved to Ohio at an early day. **Rev. Christian Wolfe** was the first class leader at Lewisburg (1806), and founder of the Evangelical work in the state of New York. **Andrew Wolfe,** the youngest, was born in 1784, and died near Lewisburg, Pa., in 1871. His wife, **Anna,** was a sister of **Rev. John Dreisbach. Andrew Wolfe** was licensed to preach in 1816. His sons, **Aaron** and **Simon,** were Evangelical preachers and three of his daughters were preachers' wives.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ecclesiastical Organization.

Pentecostal meeting at Dreisbach's—A great ingathering follows—First Annual Conference — Its transactions — Success at Linglestown — A memorable Easter—Albright's failing health—A new leader—Subsequent Annual Conferences—First General Conference—Organization of the Evangelical Association.

THE year 1807 marks the culmination of the work of **Albright** in the organization of an ecclesiastical body, as we shall presently show. However, before noting this event we must take a survey of the work in the several months preceding.

In the month of January, 1807, **Albright** changed the preachers by placing **Miller** on the old and **Walter** on the new circuit.[1] **Miller** had spent only eight months on the new circuit the previous year, yet in that brief time he had organized over one hundred persons into classes, besides having in prospect the winning of three gifted young men for the ministry. These men were **John Dreisbach, Jacob Fry,** and **Henry Niebel,** all of whom had rendered him great assistance. The revival fires kindled by **Miller** on the new circuit did not die out with his removal, but continued to burn under the zealous labors of his successor.

In the month of April, on the day of Pentecost, there was held a general meeting in Penns Valley, Centre County, attended by all the preachers. At this meeting the youthful **Dreisbach** was given license as a local preacher by **Albright,**[2] after which he spent much of his time assisting the ministers until he entered the active ranks.

From what we can gather it is evident that the work across the mountains in Bedford, Somerset, and Cambria Counties, was now served in connection with the new circuit, as we know that

1 "Albright and Miller," p. 126.

2 "The Past, Present, and Future," by Dreisbach, in "Evangelical Messenger," Vol. VIII, p. 20.

HOUSE WHERE FIRST CONFERENCE WAS HELD, 1807.

both **Albright** and **Walter** visited these localities repeatedly this year. The transfer of **Miller** to the old circuit was attended by a general quickening, and revivals occurred in several places. Near the present town of Millersville, in Lancaster County, a very considerable ingathering took place. Among the trophies was a gifted young man, **John Erb,** who within the year began to exercise the gifts of the ministry and entered the active work at the second conference in 1809.

The revival begun on the Muehlbach continued with the result that many influential families, who had hitherto hesitated to leave their old church connections, now broke away amid much persecution and united with the Evangelical class.

It will be apparent to the most casual reader of the accounts of the success of **Albright** and his co-laborers that there was a steady tendency toward the formation of an ecclesiastical organization, although this was not the design of the evangelists. The same results attended the labors of **Rev. John Wesley,** although he opposed it, and died in full connection with the Church of England. Leaders like **Wesley, Otterbein, Newcomer,** and **Albright** were chosen instruments in the hands of God to bring about certain reforms in the Christian Church, and the gathering together of the results of their labors into separate bodies seems to have been a wise provision of Providence for the better continuation of their distinctive work, in order that vital godliness, which had so sadly declined, might again through them be awakened in the parent bodies.

We have already noted that concerted action had been taken, presumably at the General Assembly of 1806, that an annual conference should thereafter be held. We knew nothing of how the call was made or the time and place appointed. We only know that the first conference was held on November 13-15, 1807, at the house of **Samuel Becker,** on the Muehlbach, near Shafferstown, in Lebanon County.

First Annual Conference.—According to previous arrangement, the first regular conference of "The Albright Brethren," as they were then called, was held at the house of **Samuel Becker,** on the Muehlbach, Lebanon County, November 13-15, 1807. The

body was composed of ministers in full connection, **Jacob Albright, John Walter,** and **George Miller;** ministers on trial, **John Dreisbach** and **Jacob Fry;** local preachers, **Charles Bisse, Solomon Miller,** and **Jacob Phillips;** also twenty class officials; in all twenty-eight persons. Of the latter class **Christopher Spangler,** of Centre County, and **John Thomas,** of Mifflin County, were made local preachers. There was one ministerial absentee, **Alexander Jamison,** who was no longer in the active work. The records of the conference are very meager, of which the following is the substance:

Rev. Jacob Albright was elected to the office of bishop and **G. Miller** to the order of elder, by a majority of votes. The latter, however, was not ordained at this time.

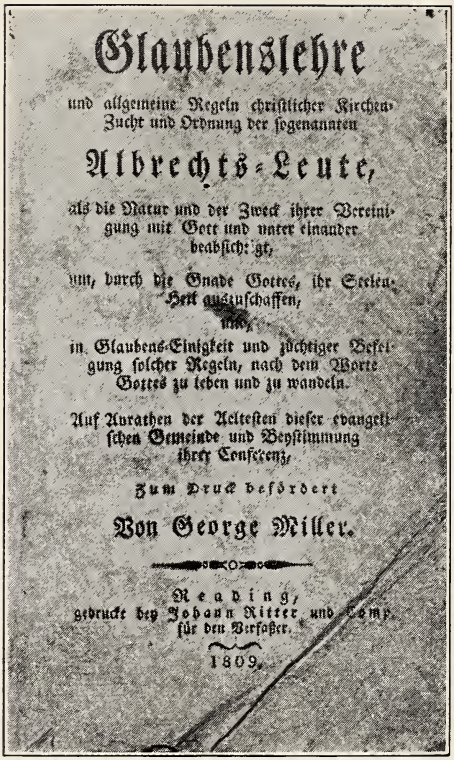
Evidently the ecclesiastical status of the conference was a subject of deliberation, and inasmuch as there may have been then a prospect of a continuance of their work as an adjunct of the Methodists, they took as their official title, "The Newly Formed Methodist Conference." However, as the term "Methodist" was generally applied to all the newly-formed evangelistic sects, the term may have been used in that sense.

The subject of a creed and rules of government was also considered, and upon the advice of **Albright** the Episcopal (not Methodist Episcopal, as some held), was adopted,[3] and he was directed by conference to formulate such a work and have it printed. This however, he did not live to accomplish.

No changes were made in the appointments of the preachers. Two young men entered the active work. **John Dreisbach,** who was assigned to assist **Walter** on the old circuit, and **Jacob Fry,** who was placed as assistant to **Miller** on the new circuit.

The organization of the conference had the immediate effect to solidify the Evangelical work. It is evident that all concerned looked forward to the movement as of a permanent character, but whether as an independent body or in an associated form, none could tell. That the founder looked upon the movement as a Divine agency destined to go on, is shown in his declaration to **John Dreisbach,** but a short time before his death. In refer-

3 *Auf Bruder Albrecht's anrathen wurde die Bischöfliche Regierungs form angenommen."* "Albright and Miller," p. 129.



Glaubenslehre

und allgemeine Regeln christlicher Kirchen-Zucht und Ordnung der sogenannten

Albrechts-Leute,

als die Natur und der Zweck ihrer Vereinigung mit Gott und unter einander beabsichtigt,

um, durch die Gnade Gottes, ihr Seelen-Heil auszuschaffen,

und,

in Glaubens-Einigkeit und züchtiger Befolgung solcher Regeln, nach dem Worte Gottes zu leben und zu wandeln.

Auf Anrathen der Aeltesten dieser evangelischen Gemeinde und Beystimmung ihrer Conferenz,

Zum Druck befördert

Von George Miller.

Reading,
gedruckt bey Johann Ritter und Comp.
für den Verfasser.
1809.

PHOTOGRAPHIC REPRODUCTION OF TITLE PAGE OF THE FIRST EVANGELICAL DISCIPLINE, PREPARED BY REV. GEORGE MILLER, AND PRINTED BY JOHN RITTER IN READING, PENNA., IN 1809.

ence to the work he said: *"If it is God's will that you shall be a permanent association, He will also provide the elements necessary to success. He will raise up men from among you who will take up the burden I no longer can bear, and consummate the work. It is of God and in His hands, and He will provide."*

These words, uttered at the sunset of his consecrated life, have a deep meaning for all Christian ministers to-day. They indicate the true spirit of service. The true, earnest Christian worker never lives to see the consummation of all his hopes and plans; he is only a factor, doing part of a work that grows greater, grander, and more perfect with the coming years. Let all Christian ministers possess the calm faith and spirit of humble trust in God that animated the sainted **Albright.** Our work, like his work, is of God and He will provide all things necessary to success.

The Doctrinal Basis of the Evangelical Church.—At the First Annual Conference (1807), upon the advice of **Jacob Albright,**[4] the Episcopal form of Church Polity was adopted, and the conference directed him to prepare a book of Discipline containing articles of faith and ecclesiastical regulations. Failing health and early death prevented the accomplishment of this work.

About this time **Bishop Asbury,** the head of the Methodist Episcopal Church, directed **Rev. Henry Boehm,** of his Connection, to prepare a German edition of the Methodist book of Discipline for the use of that Church. This work made its appearance in 1808, under the supervision of **Boehm,** but the translations were made by **Dr. Ignatz Roemer,** a very learned man, who had prepared for the priesthood in a European university, but, getting disgusted with the corruption of the Romish Church, had come to America.

Soon after the death of **Albright,** his successor, **George Miller,** was entrusted with the preparation of the book of Discipline. He set to performing his task at once and was able to lay the work before the conference at its second session, which was held at his own house in April, 1809. The conference approved the work

4 "Albrecht und Miller," p. 129.

and directed him to publish it, which he did at once. The book was printed by **John Ritter**, of Reading, in 1809, and contains 75 pages. The contents of the book are an introductory preface, followed by a creed or "Confession of Faith," as it is called. The rest of the book consists of "Directions" for personal Christian conduct, Church officials, and organizations. It contained no rituals whatever, and the preachers evidently made use of the rituals of the established churches.

An examination and comparison of the Methodist and the Evangelical books of Discipline shows that the former contains twenty-five and the latter twenty-six articles of faith. A comparison of the two Creeds shows that all of the twenty-five articles of the Methodist Creed were taken by the Evangelicals, unaltered, and one was added by them. This fact gave rise to the general impression that the **Albrights** in 1809, were essentially "Methodist," from the fact that they adopted entire the Creed of that Church.[5] This, however, is erroneous, as we will now show.

An examination of the Methodist Creed, so called shows that it, too, was borrowed;[6] thus showing that the Methodist and the Evangelical Churches have a common creedal history. The original or fundamental Creed from which the twenty-five Articles of Faith aforenamed were taken, are the "Thirty-Nine Articles" of the Church of England, or Episcopal Church. This Creed was formulated in the days of the Reformation and since 1562 has remained unaltered.

In this connection the reader should call to mind that **John Wesley**, the founder of Methodism, lived and died in full connection with the Church of England. The distinctive work of **Wesley**, which was called "Methodism," was introduced into America by immigrants and spread rapidly. For many years "Methodism," as a distinct form of Church life, was entirely in the hands of "lay" evangelists. Among the latter was **Francis**

5 "Albright and Miller," p. 129.

6 "August 5, 1810, Middletown, Pa. We here broke bread with Doctor Roemer, a German, who has translated our Discipline for our countrymen." (Bishop Asbury's Journal, Vol. III, p. 293.)

Asbury, destined to be the first bishop of Methodism in America. He was born in 1745, was converted in boyhood, and became a Methodist. At the age of sixteen years he became a local preacher, and as such came to America as a lay missionary when twenty-six years of age. Through **Asbury,** chiefly, Methodism spread rapidly, but all its ministers were simply evangelists or local preachers.

In 1784, **Rev. Thomas Coke,** a co-laborer with **Wesley,** and a presbyter of the Church of England, was sent by the latter to America to organize Methodism and impart ordination to its ministry. The famous "Christmas" conference (Dec. 25, 1784), held at Baltimore, Maryland, marks the beginning of the ecclesiastical history of Methodism in America. At that time **Coke** ordained **Asbury,** first as a deacon, then as an elder, and on the twenty-seventh as bishop of the newly-organized "Methodist Episcopal Church." The Book of Discipline containing the Creed, regulations, etc., had been prepared for them by **Wesley** himself, *drawn by him from the Book of Common Prayer,* a few of the regulations excepted. **Bishop Asbury,** with true apostolic zeal, labored in this distinctive field until called to his reward in 1816.

In considering the appropriation by **Wesley** of the doctrinal part of the Creed of the Church of England, we find that he adopted only that which in his judgment was essential, omitting such paragraphs and articles not of moment to the new Connection. Article XXIII, The recognition of the Government of the United States, is the only one not drawn from the "Thirty-Nine Articles."

We here subjoin the Articles of Faith as furnished by **Wesley.** The numbers in brackets are their corresponding numbers in the Episcopal Creed.

Methodist (1784) and Evangelical (1809) Articles of Faith.

1.	[I.]	Of Faith in the Holy Trinity.
2.	[II.]	Of the Word, or Son of God who was made very Man.
3.	[IV.]	Of the Resurrection of Christ.
4.	[V.]	Of the Holy Ghost.
5.	[VI.]	The Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.
6.	[VII.]	Of the Old Testament.
7.	[IX.]	Of Original or Birth Sin.
8.	[X.]	Of Free Will.
9.	[XI.]	Of the Justification of Man.
10.	[XII.]	Of Good Works.
11.	[XIV.]	Of Works of Superérogation.
12.	[XVI.]	Of Sin after Baptism, ("Justification," Methodist and Evangelical).
13.	[XIX.]	Of the Church.
14.	[XXII.]	Of Purgatory.
15.	[XXIV.]	Of speaking in the Congregation in such a tongue as the people understand.
16.	[XXV.]	Of the Sacraments.
17.	[XXVII.]	Of Baptism.
18.	[XXVIII.]	Of the Lord's Supper.
19.	[XXX.]	Of Both Kinds. (Sacramental.)
20.	[XXXI.]	Of the one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross.
21.	[XXXII.]	Of the Marriage of Priests. ("Ministers," Methodist and Evangelical).
22.	[XXXIV.]	Of the Traditions of the Church, ("Rites and Ceremonies").
23.		Of the Rulers of the United States, (Wesleyan, adopted by Evangelical).
24.	[XXXVIII.]	Of Christian Men's Goods, which are not common.
25.	[XXXIX.]	Of a Christian Man's Oath.
26.		Of the Last Judgment. This was the only Article supplied by **Miller.**

In the new edition of the Evangelical Discipline (1817), Articles 11, 14, 19, 21, and 22, are omitted, thus reducing the Evangelical Creed to twenty-one Articles. The Baptismal, Marriage, Burial, and Sacramental rituals in the new Evangelical Discipline were also taken from the Book of Common Prayer.

In closing this subject it is interesting to note that the Evangelical body planted itself squarely upon a Creed of the Reformation period, and, considering the Methodists as of English origin, the Evangelical is the only denomination of strictly American origin which has that distinction.

CHAPTER IX.

Denominational Development.

Success at Linglestown—A memorable Easter meeting—Albright disabled—New leaders to the front—Success continues—Second conference—Ordination at Eby's—First Discipline and Catechism published—Third conference—First camp-meeting—Successive conferences—First General Conference—Evangelical Association.

SOMETIME in the winter of 1807-8 **Albright** passed through Linglestown, Dauphin County, during a snow storm, and stopped at the home of **Peter Raidabaugh,** who lived near the village, and asked permission to stay over night, which was granted. **Mr. Raidabaugh** was a man highly esteemed, a deacon and the chorister of the Lutheran church at that place. Soon after **Albright** had entered the house the storm abated, and he informed his host that he was a minister and with his permission he would preach in his house that evening. This request also was granted and an effort was made to gather the people for the service. The sermon was based on the words, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 Jno. 1:9). On account of the spiritual darkness of the community the sermon created quite a sensation, and the speaker was publicly charged by his hearers with having preached false doctrine. The hearers held that all men are sinners and must remain so till death. This was the prevalent notion of the Germans at that time. **Albright,** however, pointed them to the Bible that lay before him as the authority for his doctrine which also was in harmony with their own Catechism in which they all believed. Upon this his host and others began a comparison of the teachings of their Catechism and the doctrine preached, with the result that they were led to see the truth of the sermon. Then **Raidabaugh** permitted another service to be appointed in his house for a Sunday morning. On that occasion a large number of evil-disposed persons came to

the house for the purpose of breaking up the meeting. But they came too late, as the service had already been concluded and **Albright**, accompanied by **Raidabaugh**, had started for the afternoon appointment at **Michael Becker's**, eight miles distant.

The leaven of the gospel was working fast at Linglestown. Many people were convinced of the truth and an ingathering was in prospect. So great was the opposition on the part of many against the work of **Albright**, that they resolved to prevent his inroads by force. Accordingly when he made his third visit to the place, and while preaching at the house of **Raidabaugh**, an attack was made upon the congregation in which a number of the Evangelicals were injured, but **Albright** escaped without injury.[1] **Raidabaugh** now identified himself with the Evangelical cause and he and others who joined him became the subjects of bitter persecution.

A Memorable Easter Meeting.—On Easter day, 1808, there was held a general meeting at the house of **John Brobst**, in Albany Township, Berks County. This was also the home of the **Millers, Brobst** being their brother-in-law. This meeting was attended by all the ministers, and seems to have been of a semi-official character, as some business was transacted. Among other things, **Albright** stationed the preachers, *and this for the last time*. He placed **Walter** and **Fry** on the old, and **Miller** and **Dreisbach** on the new circuit.

Albright's health had been failing very fast since the conference, and he preached and traveled with great difficulty. Notwithstanding his precarious condition he was loath to leave the field. A general meeting had been appointed at the home of **Peter Raidabaugh** at Linglestown, to be held one week later than the one at **Brobst's.** This meeting was attended by **Albright, Miller** and **Dreisbach**, who evidently went there directly from the Easter meeting. **Albright** was not able to preach at this meeting and at its close he started for his home nearly fifty miles away. With this meeting we draw the curtain on the public life of this great and good man. From here **Miller** and **Dreisbach**

1 See "Evangelical Annals," p. 54. Father Raidabaugh removed to Morrow County, Ohio, where he died in 1838, aged 74 years.

started for their fields of labor, while their leader went home, as they well knew, *to die*.

Continuation of Albright's Work.—The loss of their intrepid leader did not in the least check the spread of the Evangelical work. Although **Walter** was the senior in service, to **Miller** was awarded the leadership of the infant society, by general consent. The young men in preparation for work were now ready to take the field. Sometime during the summer (1808) **Jacob Fry, Walter's** assistant on the old circuit, was sent to organize the work of the third, or Franklin Circuit, already noted. **John Erb,** of Lancaster County, took his place. The prospects on this third field were very promising. **Albright** and **Walter** had sown the good seed in many places, as we have seen. In the midst of his success **Fry** left the field in consequence of a misdemeanor, and the work was irregularly supplied for some time.

Another sore trial, second only to the death of **Albright,** now befell the Evangelical work. In December (1808), while assisting **Dreisbach** at a meeting in Lost Creek Valley, in Juniata County, **Miller** broke down completely and retired to his home in Berks County. Although he was able to render some assistance and retained the leadership for some years, he never again occupied a field of labor. But since the Evangelical work was of God, He had a man ready to take the place of **Miller,** in the person of the gifted and devoted **Mathias Betz,** of Milheim, Centre County. **Dreisbach** was now in charge of the new circuit with **Betz** as his assistant.

The Second Annual Conference was held in April, 1809, at the home of **John Brobst** in Berks County. This was the same place where the Easter meeting was held one year previous. The ministers recorded as present were **George Miller,** president; **John Dreisbach,** secretary; **John Walter, John Erb, Mathias Betz,** and **Henry Niebel.** There is no record of local preachers being present, although there were doubtless some present.

The records of business transacted are very meager. **John Walter** and **John Dreisbach** were voted elder's orders, but their ordination—as well as that of **Miller,** which had been granted him at the first conference—was deferred for some unknown reason,

until a general meeting a few months later, at the house of **Henry Eby**, near Lebanon. **Jacob Fry** was excluded from the Connection.

Rev. George Miller reported the completion of the Church Discipline which he had been appointed to prepare. The conference approved the work and authorized him to have it printed. **John Dreisbach**, having translated a Catechism from the English, was authorized to publish it. Both the foregoing books appeared soon afterwards (1809), and were *the first fruits* of our Evangelical literature.

John Walter was allowed $42.00 out of the subsidiary fund for the purchase of a horse.

It was resolved that for the present the body should be known by the title *"The So-called Albright People"* (Die sogenannten Albrecht's Leute.")

Rev. George Miller was requested to write and preach as his failing health would permit.

The preachers were assigned as follows: Schuylkill Circuit (old), **John Dreisbach, Henry Niebel,** and **M. Betz**; Northumberland Circuit (new), **John Walter** and **John Erb.** Franklin Circuit was served irregularly.

Notwithstanding the death of **Albright** and the breakdown of **Miller,** the work had been successful and five classes had been formed during the past year.

The Third Conference was held at the home of **George Becker,** on the Muehlbach, April 18-20, 1810. **Rev. George Miller** was president and **Rev. John Dreisbach** secretary. The itinerants now numbered seven, and the local preachers ten. The membership was 528. **Michael Becker** and **David Yerlitz** were received in the traveling connection, and **J. Erb** and **M. Betz** were ordained deacons. **George Miller** was again requested to write and preach as his health would permit. **John Walter** was authorized to publish a small hymn book he had prepared.

It was resolved to hold two camp-meetings this year, the first of the Connection. The first was held in May, on the **Michael Maize** farm, two miles below New Berlin, in Union County, and the second at **Rev. George Miller's,** in Berks County, in

October. *These were the first German camp-meetings ever held in America,* and perhaps in the world.

The preachers were stationed as follows: Schuylkill and Lancaster Circuit, **J. Walter, H. Niebel,** and **M. Becker**; Northumberland, **John Dreisbach** and **D. Yerlitz**; Franklin, **J. Erb** and **M. Betz.** Arrangements were made for some of the preachers to exchange places during the year. This was a year of success, and many classes were formed, especially on the Franklin Circuit.

The Fourth Annual Conference was held on the Muehlbach, April 9-11, 1811. **George Miller** was president; **John Dreisbach,** secretary; **L. Zimmerman** was received in the traveling connection; **H. Niebel** was ordained deacon. There were twelve local preachers. Fourteen new classes had been formed. The entire membership was 740. The average salary of the preachers was $29.00. Catechetical instruction was enjoined.

The ministers were stationed as follows: Schuylkill, **J. Walter, M. Betz,** and **D. Yerlitz**; Northumberland, **J. Erb** and **L. Zimmerman**; Franklin, **John Dreisbach, H. Niebel,** and **M. Becker. George Miller** was again requested to assist, as his health permitted.

The Fifth Annual Conference was held at the home of **Martin Dreisbach,** in Buffalo Valley, Union County, April 1-3, 1812. **George Miller** was president; **John Dreisbach,** secretary. **John Erb** was ordained elder and **Henry Niebel** deacon. Five young men were received in the traveling connection—**Robert McCray, Michael Diebler, Abraham Huth, John Buchwalter,** and **Frederick Shower.** The membership was 761.

The preachers were stationed as follows: Franklin Circuit, **J. Walter** and **D. Yerlitz**; Lancaster Circuit, **J. Erb** and **M. Diebler**; York Circuit, **M. Betz** and **M. Becker**; Schuylkill Circuit, **H. Niebel** and **A. Huth**; Northumberland Circuit, **L. Zimmerman, J. Buchwalter,** and **F. Shower.** To form a new circuit, **J. Dreisbach** and **R. McCray.** Conference directed that efforts be made to purchase lots and erect homes for poor itinerants on the Schuylkill and Northumberland Circuits, and the matter was left in the hands of the elders and trustees of those charges.

The Sixth Annual Conference was held at the home of **Martin Dreisbach**, April 21-23, 1813, with **George Miller** president and **John Dreisbach** secretary. Two preachers were expelled; **G. Miller** and **J. Erb** located because of bodily infirmities; **H. Niebel** and **M. Betz** were voted elder's orders, and **D. Yerlitz** and **L. Zimmerman** deacon's orders. Five young men entered the traveling connection as follows: **Adam Hennig, John Kleinfelter, John Stambaugh, Jacob Kleinfelter,** and **John Walter.** The preachers were stationed as follows: Schuylkill Circuit, **J. Walter, J. Kleinfelter,** and **J. Walter, Jr.**; Northumberland, **M. Betz, R. McCray, A. Buchman,** and **J. Stambaugh**; Franklin, **H. Niebel** and **M. Diebler**; York, **L. Zimmerman** and **F. Shower.** To organize a new circuit, **J. Dreisbach** and **A. Hennig**; a second new circuit, **D. Yerlitz** and **John Kleinfelter.**

The Seventh Annual Conference also was held at the house of **Martin Dreisbach,** April 13-15, 1814; **John Dreisbach** president, **Henry Niebel** secretary. One minister was deposed; **M. Betz** died, and **John Walter, Albright's** first assistant, left the active work. **Thomas Brewer, Michael Walter,** and **Henry Stauffer** were taken into the traveling connection; **F. Shower, A. Hennig, A. Buchman,** and **J. Stambaugh** were ordained deacons. **John Dreisbach** was elected presiding elder for a term of four years, being the *first* incumbent of that office. The ministers were placed as follows: Union Circuit, **H. Neibel** and **John Kleinfelter**; Bedford, **D. Yerlitz** and **Michael Walter**; York, **J. Stambaugh** and **T. Brewer**; Franklin, **F. Shower**; Somerset, **A. Buchman** and **Jacob Kleinfelter**; Lancaster, **L. Zimmerman** and **H. Stauffer**; Schuylkill, **A. Hennig.**

The Eighth Annual Conference was held at the house of **Jacob Kleinfelter,** near Shrewsbury, York County, April 4-6, 1815. The officers were **Henry Niebel** president, **John Kleinfelter** secretary. **David Thomas, John DeHoff,** and **Jacob Brewer** were taken into the traveling connection; **D. Yerlitz** located; **John** and **Jacob Kleinfelter** (brothers), and **T. Brewer** were ordained deacons. **H. Niebel** was elected as the second presiding elder. The conference was divided into two districts, name Canaan and Salem.

The preachers were assigned as follows: I. Canaan District, **J. Dreisbach,** presding elder; Franklin Circuit, **T. Brewer** and **J. DeHoff**; York, **A. Buchman** and **D. Thomas**; Lancaster, **John Kleinfelter** and **J. Brewer**; Schuylkill, **L. Zimmerman.** II. Salem District, **H. Niebel,** presiding elder; Union Circuit, **J. Stambaugh** and **Jacob Kleinfelter**; Centre, **F. Shower** and **H. Stauffer**; Somerset, **A. Hennig** and **M. Walter.**

The Ninth Annual Conference was held at the home of **Abraham Eyer** at (now) Winfield, Union County, June 11-13, 1816. Chairman, **J. Dreisbach**; secretary, **H. Niebel. A. Buchman, T. Brewer** and **H. Stauffer** located; **George Miller** had died; **L. Zimmerman** and **F. Shower** were ordained elders, and **M. Walter, D. Thomas, J. DeHoff** and **Solomon Miller** deacons. The latter was one of the first local preachers (1806). There were now 41 local ministers in the Connection. Nine men were received into the ministry, namely, **John Frueh, Philip Smith, Moses DeHoff, Adam** and **Benjamin Ettinger, John Shilling, John Rickel, Andrew Wolf** and **F. Kaltreiter.**

This session marks a new era in the Evangelical work. The conference seems to have reached the stage of denominational consciousness and accordingly resolved to hold a General Conference composed of representative ministers. A printing house, denominational literature, etc., were provided for, missionary work was instituted, and charges were formed in New York and Ohio.

The following assignment of the ministers will show the expansion of the work at this period: I. Canaan District, **J. Dreisbach** presiding elder. Franklin Circuit, **J. Brewer** and **F. Kaltreiter**; York, **L. Zimmerman** and **A. Ettinger**; Lancaster, **D. Thomas** and **A. Wolfe**; Schuylkill, **J. Frueh** and **B. Ettinger**; Lake Mission (in Seneca County, New York), **Jacob Kleinfelter.** II. Salem District, **H. Niebel** presiding elder. Union Circuit, **John Kleinfelter** and **M. DeHoff**; Columbia, **P. Smith**; Centre, **J. Stambaugh**; Bedford, **J. DeHoff** and **J. Shilling**; Somerset, **M. Walter** and **J. Rickel**; Canton Mission (Ohio), **A. Hennig**; Scioto Mission (Ohio), **F. Shower.**

The First General Conference.—Pursuant to the order of the last annual conference, the delegates met at the house of **Martin**

Dreisbach in Buffalo Valley, to hold the first General Conference, October 14-17, 1816. **J. Dreisbach** was elected president and **H. Niebel** secretary. There were present also **J. Erb, J. Stambaugh, J. Kleinfelter, S. Miller, D. Thomas, J. Frueh** and **A. Ettinger.**

The printing house at New Berlin was placed in charge of **Rev. S. Miller.** The hymn book and new (revised) Discipline prepared by **J. Dreisbach** and **H. Niebel,** by order of the last conference, were approved and ordered to be printed. **Bishop Christian Newcomer,** of the United Brethren Church, was present on behalf of his denomination to urge a union of the two bodies, whereupon a committee was appointed to meet a similar committee of the United Brethren Church to discuss the matter. Meanwhile the publication of the hymn book and Discipline was deferred. This joint commission met at the house of **Henry Kummler,** near Greencastle, Pa., on February 14, 1817, but failed to effect the union. The General Conference adopted the name *"The Evangelical Association of North America,"* as the official designation of the former "So-called Albright People."

At this point we may properly close our records relative to the formative period of the work of **Rev. Jacob Albright,** as from this conference forward its further consideration belongs to the wider field of denominational history.

In closing we may yet note that at the time of this conference the first Church edifice was in course of erection at New Berlin, in the rear of which was the printing house. A distinctive denominational literature was provided. Moreover, the Evangelical work was established in five states, namely, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, New York, and Ohio, and all this within eight years after the death of the founder of the Church.

CHAPTER X.

Last Days of Albright.

Albright bids farewell to his ministers — Journeys homeward — Reaches George Becker's—Triumphant death—Impressive obsequies—His family—His personal appearance—His influence on others—"Afterglow"—Centennial Celebration of First Conference Organization.

WE now come to the closing scenes of the life of this remarkable man, **Rev. Jacob Albright.** In the previous chapter we left him in a precarious condition the week following Easter, 1808, while attending a general meeting at the house of **Peter Raidabaugh,** at Linglestown, Dauphin County. At the close of this meeting his coworkers, **Miller** and **Dreisbach,** took their departure for their field of labor. **Albright** was not able to preach at this meeting and was rapidly growing weaker. Just before his coworkers left him, he gave them this excellent counsel:

"In all you do or intend to do, let it be your aim to promote the honor and glory of God, and to promulgate and exalt the operations of His grace, both in your own hearts and among your brethren and sisters; and be faithful coworkers with them in the path which the Lord has shown unto you, and He will grant you His blessing."

As he extended his parting hand to **Dreisbach** he quoted the lines of a familiar hymn:

"Kämpfe bis auf's Blut und Leben;
Dring hinein in Gottes Reich."

["Fight on even unto blood and death; press into the kingdom of God."]

The purpose of **Albright** was to reach his home, about forty miles distant, by easy stages. From **Raidabaugh's** he rode to **Peter Walter's,** near Jonestown, whom we have already noted as one of the first adherents of **Albright** in Bucks County and

SITE AND FARM WHERE ALBRIGHT DIED.

the first class leader of the Connection. Accompanied by **Abraham,** son of **Father Walter,** he proceeded to the home of **Jacob Gleim,** in the vicinity of Shafferstown. From here, accompanied by **Gleim,** he started on the last stage of his journey to the home which was fifteen miles distant. But his strength was exhausted and he found it impossible to continue his journey.

He was now in the locality where he had begun his evangelistic labors. Here he had suffered the greatest persecution for preaching the gospel, and here his heavenly Master had given him his greatest success. He was now on the Muehlbach, where lived **George Becker,** in whose house he had held the Council of 1806, and **Samuel Becker,** in whose house he had held his first conference. Here was a good place to die, amid the trophies of his labors. Coming from the direction of Shafferstown the house of **George Becker** is reached first. This good man had a room with bed dedicated to the use of ministers. On reaching the short lane that leads from the public road to the house, **Albright** and his companions were seen approaching by the **Becker** family. As he reached the gate he was met by his friends, who tenderly assisted him from his horse. The first expression of the sick man was one of peculiar sadness: *"Have you made my bed ready? I have come here to die."*

Yes, the bed was ready for the weary pilgrim, and willing hands and loving hearts were ready to minister to the needs of this faithful servant of the Most High.

The news of **Albright's** fatal illness spread rapidly among his followers, so that when the end came it was not unexpected. On his death bed he steadfastly refused to speak of his suffering. Knowing that he had but a short time to live, his constant aim was to magnify the Lord Jesus. His sick chamber was not a place of sorrow, but the portal of his heavenly mansion. In the Muehlbach class were many fine singers, especially **Anna Yost,** and the survivors of the **Becker** families loved to tell how these singers daily gathered around the bed of the dying saint and sang of the "Rest remaining for the People of God."

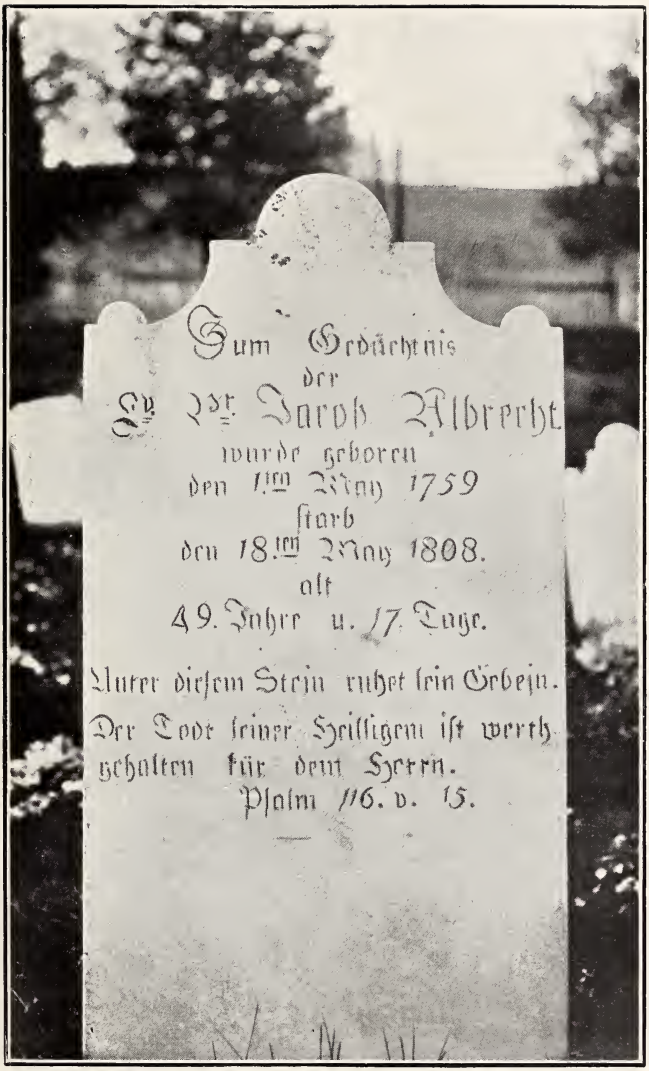
Albright retained his faculties to the last moment and as death drew near gave evidence of being filled with unutterable joy. Just before his departure he was asked how he felt. With a

smile he replied, *"Happy and heavenly."* After a pause he added, *"I shall soon be in heaven."* These were his last words, and soon his mighty spirit took its triumphant flight to receive its rich reward—*a victor's crown.* May 18, 1808, was the day of the home-going.

The news of **Albright's** death and the announced date of his obsequies spread with surprising swiftness far and near, and the funeral was consequently attended by a very large number of people. The funeral services were conducted by his spiritual son, the eloquent **John Walter,** who is said to have preached a marvellous sermon from the words, *"They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever."* (Dan. 12:3.)

Although the place of **Albright's** death was within eleven miles of his own home, it was deemed befitting that he should rather be buried in the place where he had ended his pilgrimage, the place of the greatest victories of his ministry. The body was accordingly laid away in the private burial ground of the **Becker** family on the farm where he had died. In 1850 a memorial church was erected near his grave through contributions from all parts of the Evangelical Association. Here also a village sprang up named Kleinfeltersville, named after **Rev. John Kleinfelter,** son-in-law of **George Becker,** who also slumbers here. A marble tombstone marks the grave with this inscription: *"To the memory of the Evangelical Preacher,* **Jacob Albright,** *was born May 1st, 1759, died May 18th, 1808, aged 49 years and 17 days. Under this stone rests his body. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."*

The family of **Albright** consisted of his wife, two sons and one daughter who were left in comfortable circumstances as the result of the thrift and economy of the husband and father, notwithstanding his frequent and prolonged absence from home. One of the sons died unmarried. The other, **David,** was married, in 1826, to **Mary Raidabaugh.** They had a large family and most of the children became Evangelical. In the home of this son the widowed mother died in 1828, as a member of the Evangelical Association. This statement the writer obtained from



TOMBSTONE OF JACOB ALBRIGHT.

the widow of **David Albright,** in whose house **Mother Albright** died.

Sarah, the only daughter of **Jacob Albright,** was married to **Noah Rank,** son of **Adam Rank,** who had lived near the **Albright** home in Lancaster County. Prior to 1800, **Adam Rank** and his brother, **John Rank, Sr.,** removed to (now) Union County and located where New Columbia now stands. At this place they were visited by **Albright** and his co-laborers and **Bishop Newcomer** and others. From New Columbia, **Noah Rank, Albright's** son-in-law, removed to Tioga County, where most of his family became members of the Evangelical Association. Still later he removed to Illinois and located near Freeport where he died in 1866, his wife having preceded him in 1848. Two of their sons, **Richard** and **Jacob,** became ministers of the gospel. The latter entered the ranks of the Eastern Conference of the Evangelical Association in 1837, and spent over forty years in active service. He was a presiding elder in the Pittsburgh Conference in 1853-1857, and a member of the General Conference in 1855. Later he removed to Iowa, where he died in 1905, aged over ninety years. There are still several representatives of **Albright's** family in the Evangelical ministry at the present time (1917).

Jacob Albright was of pleasing personal appearance. He was of medium height, alert and active in his bodily movements. He had a high forehead, prominent chin, dark eyes and hair, indicating a sanguine temperament. In spirit he was singularly self-possessed, cool and calm under the most trying circumstances. Of his powers as an orator we have written in another connection. His countenance reflected his deeply spiritual nature and calm repose of mind in a marked degree. An aged saint,[1] a member of the author's charge in 1875-6, was wont to tell us that **Albright's** countenance "reminded her of an angel because it was so heavenly." After a lapse of over seventy years the picture of that "heavenly" countenance remained undimmed in the memory of this old pilgrim, and the godly counsels given her

1 Mother Mary Moss, of Newport, Pa. She was the youngest child of Andrew Wonder, mentioned in connection with the Thomas class. Mother Moss passed away in triumph in 1877.

when a little girl by that man of God still inspired her life and cheered her on her journey to the home above. From the lips of other old pilgrims, long since passed to their reward, the author heard the same story of **Albright's** influence in his intercourse with others.

A number of **Albright's** own brothers, who like himself had grown up in spiritual ignorance and formalism, were through his influence brought to the light of saving truth. One of these was **George Albright**, who about 1800 located in the Middle Creek Valley, in (now) Snyder County, Pa. The home of this brother was one of the early preaching places of the evangelist in this region. In 1831 he removed to Yeagertown, Mifflin County, where he died in 1852, aged 77 years. Another brother was **David Albright**, to whom his evangelist brother paid a visit on a certain occasion and after his departure **David** found he had written a little message on the fly leaf of his Bible—two lines of a hymn reading as follows in English translation:

"It were better never to be born,
Than be forever lost."

This solemn truth was indelibly impressed on **David's** heart and proved to be seed fallen on good ground that came to fruitage "after many days." About 1830 he removed to Bucyrus, Ohio, where he was visited by **Rev. William Nast**, the leader of the German wing of the Methodist Episcopal Church, through whose ministration he was led to Christ and united with the Methodist Episcopal Church[2] He died sometime after 1850, a consistent member of that church, as were also many of his descendants.

The Afterglow.

"Can that man be dead,
Whose spiritual influence is upon his kind?
He lives in glory, and his speaking dust
Hath more of life than had its breathing mold."

Sacred Writ tells us that "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." (Prov.

2 For an interesting account of this circumstance, see "Der Christliche Botschafter" for 1851, p. 132.

4: 18.) This truth is illustrated by the abiding and growing influence of the sainted **Jacob Albright.** Over a century has passed since he fell on sleep, yet his life of zeal and devotion to preach the pure gospel still lives in the spiritual life of tens of thousands to-day. The far-reaching power of his evangelism has penetrated every continent of the globe. To the ecclesiastical bodies that claim him as their founder, his name is still "as an ointment poured forth," exhaling its fragrance in the lives of many. (S. of Sol. 1: 3.)

One hundred years after the organization of the first Evangelical Annual Conference (1807-1907), by **Albright,** a great multitude of his spiritual descendants assembled at the place of his first conference and final resting place (Kleinfeltersville, Pa.), to do him honor. This Centennial Celebration of the Organization of the First Conference was the outcome of an action to this end by the General Conference of the United Evangelical Church, in 1906. The committee having the matter in charge consisted of **Rev. J. H. Shirey,** president; **Rev. A. Stapleton, A.M., D.D.,** secretary; **Rev. S. L. Wiest, Rev. U. F. Swengel, D.D., Rev. B. H. Niebel, Rev. W. M. Stanford, D.D., Rev. A. J. Brunner,** and **J. W. Slothower.**

The exercises of the occasion began on the evening of September 26, 1907. **Rev. A. M. Sampsel** delivered an introductory address, followed by **Rev. B. H. Niebel** on "The Development of the United Evangelical Church." On the following day the attendance was very large, over sixty ministers being present. In the forenoon **Bishop H. B. Hartzler** spoke on "The Genius and Spirit of Our Church Life," and **Bishop W. F. Heil** on "Our Church Polity." In the afternoon the speakers were **Rev. A. Stapleton, A.M., D.D.,** on "Rev. Jacob Albright as Evangelist and Founder." He was followed by **Rev. C. Newton Dubs, D.D.,** Superintendent of Missions in China, on "Mission Work in China."

At sunset there was a most impressive service at the grave of **Albright.** Short addresses were made by **Rev. C. S. Haman, Prof. A. E. Gobble, A.M., D.D.,** and **Rev. S. L. Wiest. Dr. Stapleton** then briefly spoke on **Albright** as a "Patriot,"

and **Comrade Mathias Sheetz** planted an American flag on the grave.

The celebration was concluded in the evening. **Dr. R. Dubs, D.D., LL.D.,** delivered an address on "The United Evangelical Church, Organized in Accordance with the Will of God." He was followed by **Rev. W. M. Stanford, A.M., D.D.,** on "Our Future as Forecast by the Lessons of the Past." The exercises and fellowship of the celebration were deeply impressive and edifying and the event made a most favorable impression throughout the Church.

A "SADDLE-BAGS MAN."

CHAPTER XI.

"In Perils Oft." (II Cor. 11: 26).

Perils and hardships of Albright and Co-laborers—Rev. John Walter almost famished—Albright mobbed at Shafferstown—Good Samaritans appear—Albright prays for Persecutors by the wayside—Serious Disturbances at Miller's—Rowdies foiled at Jonestown—Heroic Christian women—Miller's Narrow Escape from Death—Opposition led by Ministers.

IN the days of early evangelism in America the heralds of the cross often passed through experiences that to us, with our modern advantages, seem incredible. Privation and hardship was their common experience. Our pioneer Evangelical preachers faced many perils in crossing swollen streams, lofty mountains, and trackless forests. There were then very few bridges, and with the exception of a few ferries on the larger rivers, there was no other way to cross streams but to ford them. What this meant in winter, when the clothing of the itinerant became soaked with water and then froze stiff on his person, or when he broke through the ice, may well be imagined.

In many instances our early evangelists made narrow and thrilling escapes from drowning, as they ventured to ford deep waters. Sometimes they were swept down by the swift current and were rescued as by a miracle. "The Everlasting Arms" were beneath them. (Deut. 33: 27.) We know of instances when they were pursued by packs of wolves or other fierce wild beasts. Ofttimes their horses became disabled and they were compelled to pursue their journey on foot.

The widow of **Rev. James Barber,** one of our early itinerants, told us that on one occasion her husband came home on foot, sick and utterly discouraged. His shoes were worn through and he did not have a cent of money in his pocket. "Where is your horse?" asked the wife. "He is lying dead on the Allegheny Mountains," was the answer.

Rev. George Miller, Albright's successor, once startled his wife by coming home on foot from a distant place on a dark and stormy night. He was sick, hungry, and discouraged. His horse had died and he had no means with which to procure another one. He had fully determined to abandon the ministry. His noble wife refreshed and encouraged him, and said they would plan for the future after he had recovered himself. Like many women of her day, she was an expert at spinning and weaving, and had plied her art industriously during her husband's long periods of absence. Taking the products of her industry to Reading, she told them, and with the proceeds purchased another horse for her husband, thus enabling him to continue his evangelistic work. But for this noble deed of a consecrated woman our Evangelical history might read very differently.

Ofttimes the evangelists had no money with which to procure supplies on their long journeys, and were compelled to go hungry until perchance they found a place of entertainment.

Albright tells us[1] that in his early tours he sometimes received some support which enabled him to continue further in his journeys. How insignificant that "support" was, may be inferred from a statement made by **John Dreisbach** (a colleague of **Albright**), that his own receipts from preaching for a period of six months once amounted to *nineteen cents*.[2]

An incident related to us by **Jacob Lauver**, at whose father's house in Mifflin County, our first Evangelical preachers were welcomed as early as 1802, and perhaps earlier, will illustrate the terrible privations endured by our pioneer itinerants. His parents were once startled in the dead of night by a cry of distress in the near by forests and found it came from **John Walter**, **Albright's** first assistant. Upon reaching the house he stated that for some days he had been lost in the Allegheny Mountains. Three days had passed since he had eaten a cooked meal. Since then he and his horse had eaten nothing but what they found in the forest. He asked **Mrs. Lauver** to prepare him some warm

1 "Albrecht und Miller," p. 26.

2 "Evangelical Messenger," Vol. X, p. 197.

food as quickly as possible. The fire was speedily kindled on the hearth, the kettle suspended on the crane, and a potato soup was soon set before the famished itinerant.

The following incidents from the experiences of **Albright** and his associates will give us an insight into their strenuous life and show us that, like the Apostle Paul, they were "in perils oft," not only from the elements of nature, but at the hands of their fellow men as well. It would seem impossible that in an enlightened Christian community there could be any violent physical opposition to the evangelistic work of our forefathers. We can understand the religious intolerance of the Papists, which caused our Protestant fathers to come to America in quest of religious freedom. But it is not so easy to reconcile the fact that Protestants themselves became as intolerant to dissenters and separatists here in free America as were the Papists of Europe as shown in the persecution of Quakers and Baptists in New England.

In Pennsylvania, "Founded by Deeds of Peace," we would naturally expect a most tolerant spirit In this we are mistaken, especially as it relates to the German element. The fact that not only the "Albright Brethren," but also the Methodists and the United Brethren, were frequently mobbed and many people seriously injured, attests the degree of moral darkness into which the German masses had sunk when these revival movements were in their infancy. It was quite common for mobs to attack houses in which these meetings were held and to fall upon camp-meetings in such force as to break them up. It is said that at least four lives were lost in the early stages of the work of the United Brethren in the state of Ohio.

Jacob Albright's escapes from death in the assaults made upon his person seem to us almost miraculous. The first severe attack upon him was made on the occasion of the dedication of the Reformed church at Shafferstown, Lebanon County, in the beginning of his ministry. This occurred as he was preaching to an overflow assembly in the market house near the church. After some very rough treatment he was rescued by a powerful man named **Maize,** a relative of the family of that name so prominently identified with **Albright's** work at New Berlin. **Maize** conducted the injured evangelist to the home of a well-disposed

man named **Peter Mohr**, where he remained secure for some time.

About 1799, while preaching at the same place, **Albright** was again assailed and almost killed. With his garments torn, body bruised and face bleeding from wounds, he rode to the home of a pious Reformed member named **Jacob Zentmayer**, who lived about two miles from Shafferstown. These good Samaritans put him to bed, dressed his wounds and sent for a physician. **Albright's** injuries were found to be serious and he was compelled to remain there for two weeks. This kind family nursed him tenderly, paid the doctor's fees, and soon afterwards espoused his cause and remained members of the Church **Albright** founded until their death.

One of the leading traits of **Albright** was his calmness and composure amid persecution as illustrated by the following example: On one occasion, while traveling on the turnpike leading from Reading to Womelsdorf, he was recognized by a gang of men working on the road who applied vile epithets to him. Growing bold, they then stoned him. The evangelist being on horseback, could easily have escaped. Here now was an opportunity to "do the work of an evangelist." (2 Tim. 4: 5.) Calmly dismounting from his horse he fell upon his knees by the wayside and offered up a fervent prayer for his persecutors, whereupon they were greatly ashamed of their conduct.

On another occasion, in 1803, while preaching at the house of **George Miller**, (afterwards his colleague), in Schuylkill County, a certain young man who belonged to a party that had come with the purpose of disturbing the meeting, interrupted his discourse with outbursts of profanity and threatened to strike him. **Albright** kindly remonstrated against his conduct, but in vain. **Miller** then attempted to eject the man, but was himself seized by the rowdies and violently thrown out of his own house. For this breach of the peace **Miller** cited the assailants before a justice of the peace, who rather encouraged their ungodly conduct by promptly acquitting them and placed the costs on **Miller.**

About 1805, **Albright** and his colleagues had an experience at Jonestown, Lebanon County, which but for the quick wits of the evangelists might have proved disastrous. One dark night, as

they were holding services in a small union church, a large crowd of ruffians, bent on putting an end to their incursions, filed into the building and began a violent demonstration against the evangelists who then extinguished the lights. All was now confusion within. Our handy matches were not then in use, and to light a candle with a flint spark in such a pandemonium was out of the question. Meanwhile the evangelists secured their own safety in the darkness.

As noted in a previous chapter one of the most bitter opponents of the early Evangelical work was **Colonel Michael Brobst,** the father-in-law of **Revs. George** and **Solomon Miller.** On a certain occasion he went to the house of his son-in-law, **Solomon Miller,** at a time when **Albright** was holding a big meeting there. Upon entering the house he drew his sword and proceeded to a room where a number of women were assembled. His object was to frighten or intimidate them. Standing before them he made terrible threats, but the women remained composed, notwithstanding the weapon he brandished. **Miss Magdalena Walter,** a sister of **Rev. John Walter,** proved to be the heroine of the occasion. Placing herself before the enraged old man, she boldly declared they were not afraid of his threats, as they were under God's protecting care, and without His will no harm could befall His children. She admonished the old man to cease his rage and think well on his unseemly conduct. Saying this, the brave woman asked all in the room to join her in supplication for the poor man, that God would have compassion on him and bring him into the light. This had the desired effect, and the old man put up his weapon and left the room. Afterwards he confessed that he was ashamed of his conduct.

In 1805 **Albright** conducted a big meeting at the house of **Brobst** and appointed **George Miller** to preach the first sermon, but cautioned him to be very discreet in his utterances, because **Mr. Brobst** was very bitter against him, as also against **Rev. John Walter,** for having charged him with hypocrisy in sermons preached at his place. To this caution **Miller** replied that his father-in-law was a gross sinner whose sins he must denounce. With a final caution to exercise wisdom, **Albright** entered the room where the people were assembled, followed by **Miller,** and

they saw **Brobst** there with his sword by his side. When **Brobst** saw **Miller** his face assumed an angry look and it was evident to all that he would resent with his weapon any personal references to himself. The situation was grave and **Miller** could not decide on what subject to speak, until after the opening prayer, when the words of Christ, "I am the Light of the world," flashed as a revelation from above into his mind. With the text also came the message, and without any previous preparation he preached a sermon of wonderful power. He first depicted the dark condition of the world without Christ, and then portrayed Christ in His various perfections and offices as the Great Light-Bringer. The power of the Holy Spirit fell upon the assembly, Many began to cry out for mercy, while believers shouted aloud for joy. The stern features of the father-in-law relaxed and he seemed deeply affected. Without saying a word he arose, sword in hand, and left the room. Upon his withdrawal **Albright** grasped the hand of **Miller** and with tears in his eyes commended his power and skill, but because of his father-in-law's prejudice against him and his hasty temper, advised him not to preach in his house again, as the old man's passion might get the better of him, with dire consequences. The wisdom of this advice was manifest in the fact that on May 26, 1806, while **Miller** was on a visit to his family, after a prolonged evangelistic tour, his father-in-law came to his house on horseback, called him out of the house, and after berating him roundly, attempted to ride him down with his horse. **Miller** saved himself, however, by standing close to the house and escaped with a wounded arm.

It must not be supposed that the violent opposition to **Albright** and other evangelists was unpremeditated and by irresponsible people. There are instances on record where ministers publicly urged their congregations to adopt violent measures to check the inroads of the evangelists. **Miller** tells us that in 1803 a godless minister urged his people to suppress by force the meetings **Albright** was holding at his house, and if they failed to do this he would no longer be their pastor. During this same year another nearby pastor undertook personally to convert **Miller** "from the error of his ways," and with about thirty of his members came to **Miller's** house one Sunday, first having preached a sermon against

the revival of "heretics." At first he talked smoothly and flatteringly to **Miller**, but having no scriptural arguments to sustain his formalism, he became very angry and used very unbecoming language. His followers were much chagrined because of their pastor's unseemly language and woeful lack of scriptural knowledge, and the contest ended in a victory for the evangelist

Truly our Evangelical forefathers had the spirit and devotion of the martyrs of old, and their hardships and persecutions should make us mindful of the great debt we owe to our early pioneers in the field of a world-wide evangelism.

CHAPTER XII.

Biographical Supplement, Embracing Brief Biographies of the Colleagues, Coworkers, and Chief Contemporary Evangelists of Rev. Jacob Albright.

"With them His name shall live,
Through long succeeding years,
Embalmed—with all their hearts can give,
Their praises and their tears."

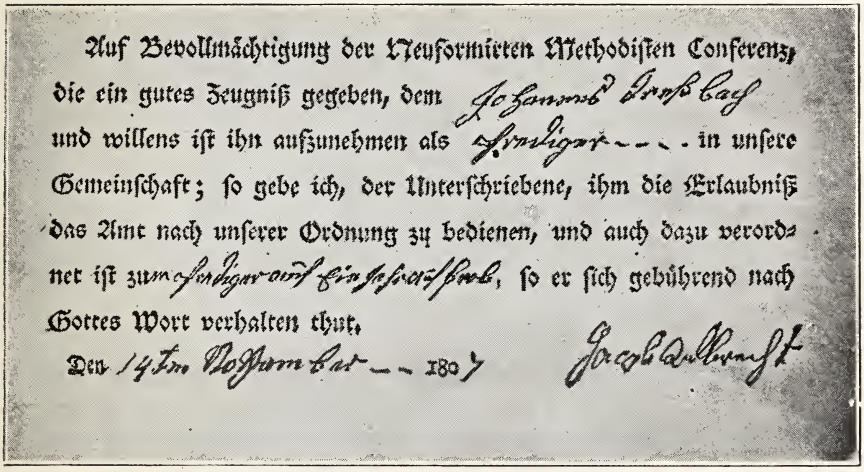
Colleagues and Coworkers of Albright.

BECAUSE of the scanty records of the times, it is difficult to determine the connection of some of the early Evangelical workers with the ministry of **Albright's** time. By this we mean such lay ministers who are known to have had ministerial authorization, and yet no records are to be found of their licensure.

In this connection it will be well for the reader to bear in mind what is said in a previous chapter of the semi-ministerial character of the office of "exhorter." In the early days of the United Brethren the offices of local preacher and exhorter were practically the same, as the latter were licensed by the yearly conference.[1] It should be remembered also that at the general meetings out of which grew the quarterly conference of our day, there was always some official business transacted by the ministers and officials present. At these meetings, of which no records are preserved, license to preach was undoubtedly officially granted by **Albright.** Thus **John Thomas, Jr.,** who died in Ohio in 1836, held a license signed by **Albright. John Dreisbach** says he received his first license from **Albright** at a general meeting in Penns Valley, in the spring of 1807, but in history he first appears as an applicant for work in the fall of that year at the first conference.

In this connection, therefore, we deem it proper to enroll a number of men as coworkers with **Albright,** since they are

1 See Berger's "History of the United Brethren Church," p. 171.


Auf Bevollmächtigung der Neuformirten Methodisten Conferenz,
die ein gutes Zeugniß gegeben, dem Johannes Dreisbach
und willens ist ihn aufzunehmen als Probiger ... in unsere
Gemeinschaft; so gebe ich, der Unterschriebene, ihm die Erlaubniß
das Amt nach unserer Ordnung zu bedienen, und auch dazu verord-
net ist zum Predigen auf Probation, so er sich gebührend nach
Gottes Wort verhalten thut.
Den 14ten November ... 1807 Jacob Albright

FACSIMILIE OF LICENSE AS A MINISTER ON PROBATION GRANTED TO JOHN DREISBACH, DATED NOVEMBER 14, 1807, WITH SIGNATURE OF JACOB ALBRIGHT.

known to have been among the first leaders and exhorters, and by tradition were local preachers from the "early days."

REV. JOHN WALTER, the first of **Jacob Albright's** co-laborers, was the son of **Peter** and **Margaret Walter**, born in Rock Hill Township, Bucks County, August 13, 1781. As the first Evangelical class was organized at his father's house and his father was the first class-leader, it seems most befitting that Providence singled out from this excellent family one of its members as a representative of its devotion to the work.

In 1801 **Albright** took young **Walter** to his home in Lancaster County, ostensibly to learn the trade of tile making, but God's design was otherwise. Although the young man, just out of his teens, was very illiterate, he accompanied **Albright** on his evangelistic tours from the first. Already in 1802 we find the young man in the saddle, engaged in evangelistic work, and in the spring of 1803 we hear of his commanding eloquence at a bush meeting at **Father Thomas'**, in Mifflin County.

It is quite evident that the young man applied himself vigorously to his books, from the fact that he was a most excellent preacher and text expositor, and he is justly regarded as the most eloquent of all the co-laborers of **Albright.** It was not unusual for him to preach with such power that large audiences were raised to their feet in praise, or pressed to their knees in penitential prayer. The author in early life met people who witnessed some of these demonstrations. The distinguished **Dr. J. G. Schmucker,**[2] for many years pastor of the Lutheran church at York, Pa., was an appreciative hearer of both **Albright** and **Walter** when they preached in the court house (the old State House) at York. In a conversation with **Rev. W. W. Orwig,**

2 Dr. J. G. Schmucker, once president of the Lutheran Synod, was one of the few prominent men of his Church who defended the evangelistic measures of his times. He once heard Albright preach on the street at Lebanon, and thought well of it. In 1838 he published a book entitled *"Die Wœchter Stimme an Zion's Kinder"* (The Watchman's Call to Zion's Children), in which he defends emphatically the work of "The Albright Brethren" as of God, but deprecates their excess of demonstrations. He died in 1854 and is buried in front of Christ Lutheran church in York, Pa. He was the father of Rev. S. S. Schmucker, the distinguished theologian of the Lutheran Church.

of the Evangelical Association, **Dr. Schmucker** expressed the opinion that **Walter** would have been one of the country's foremost preachers, had be been properly educated and trained. One of his greatest efforts was at New Berlin in 1805, as related elsewhere. Another great effort was at a bush meeting at **Father Thomas'**, in the fall of 1803, when he preached to a great multitude from the words, *"Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"* (S. of Sol. 6: 10.) In 1868 an aged pilgrim told the author that she was present at the first Evangelical camp-meeting (1810), attended by a great multitude when **Walter** preached a wonderful sermon, the power of the Holy Spirit fell on the assembly like a magnetic spell, and scores of people fell on their knees in penitence. The scene, she said, was indescribable. Another sermon of great eloquence and power preached in 1810, at the house of **Henry Myer**, near Dover, York County, brought the widow of the sainted **Rev. Adam Ettinger, Sr.**, and his entire family into the Evangelical fold. **Walter** possessed poetical talents of a high order. In 1810 he published a small hymn book containing fifty-six hymns, some of them his own composition. Some of these effusions have survived of which one of the best known is the one he composed while crossing the Allegheny Mountains in a snowstorm, on his way to the home of **George Kring**, in Cambria County, beginning as follows:

"Kommt, Brueder, kommt, wir eilen fort,
Nach Neu Jerusalem.
Vermerkt ihr nicht die güldne Pfort
Die dorten vor euch glimmt?"

After eleven years of most arduous labors, **Walter's** health failed completely and he retired from the field. He first moved to the Muehlbach, Lebanon County, where his wife's people, the **Beckers** lived. Later he located near Jonestown, whither his parents had moved from Bucks County. From 1813 to 1818 this Evangelical Boanerges, who had thrilled thousands with his fiery eloquence was bound in the fetters of a wasting comsumption. After much patient endurance he was granted a triumphant entrance into the Saints' Everlasting Rest, on December 3, 1818,

at the early age of 37 years, 3 months and 6 days. His body rests in the Faber family graveyard, near Mt. Nebo, where the Evangelical Association some years ago placed a monument at his grave.

Walter was married in 1808, to **Christena Becker,** a sister of the noted brothers, **Samuel** and **George Becker,** of the Muehlbach, where the first conference was held and where **Albright** died. After **Walter's** death the widow retired to the old **Becker** homestead, where she died in 1868 and was buried in the **Becker** family graveyard. **John Walter,** an only son, born in 1812, died in Lebanon, Pa., over eighty years of age.

REV. GEORGE MILLER, Albright's immediate successor and the most successful organizer of all his coworkers, was born at Pottstown, Pa., February 16, 1774, and was the son of **Jacob** and **Elizabeth Miller.** When still a child, his father removed to Alsace Township, Berks County, Pa., where he died in 1784, leaving the rearing of the children to the wife, who was a good, industrious mother, and sought to bring up her family according to Christian principles.

At the age of sixteen **George Miller** was instructed and confirmed in the Lutheran doctrine at Reading, and became a member of that Church. At this time, he says, he felt the insufficiency of all this to give him peace of mind and the consciousness of salvation. He sought the advice of ministers, but alas, like himself, they were in the dark and bade him calm his fears.

After learning the trade of millwright, he, in 1798 purchased a tract of land, with a mill site, in Brunswick Township, Schuylkill County, where he erected a grist mill and soon did a prosperous business. His spiritual troubles in the meanwhile became more and more acute, so that his distress was intolerable. While in this condition he was visited by **Jacob Albright** and also heard him preach from the words, *"Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death."* (Jer. 21:8.) This sermon, with some personal counsel by the evangelist, gave him his proper spiritual setting and led him to pray as never before for salvation.

In 1800 he was married to **Magdalena,** daughter of **Col. Michael Brobst,** of whom an account is given elsewhere. He

was often visited by **Albright,** but not until the early part of the year 1802 did he come into the clear light of salvation. It was when he was in deepest spiritual distress that God sent His servant **Albright** to his home for a night's lodging. In family prayer the evangelist plead so earnestly for the distresed man that he broke out in weeping. The following day **Miller** accompanied **Albright** to his appointment at the home of **Leonard Zimmerman,** and on the way thither was clearly instructed how to find acceptance with God. **Albright's** sermons were singularly adapted to **Miller's** condition, with the result that soon thereafter he was wonderfully saved.

From this time on he was a coworker with **Albright.** A preaching place was established in his home, as well as in that of his brother **Solomon.** In 1803 a class was formed here of which **George Miller** was made the leader. The community being hostile to the work of the evangelists, **Miller** had to endure incredible persecution. Those indebted to him refused to pay him, his business was boycotted, his mill damaged, meetings at his house were broken up, and yet in all this distress he could get no legal redress because of the hostility of the justice of the peace. He now sold his property and removed to a small farm he purchased on Pine Creek, in Albany Township, Berks County, near his father-in-law, where he engaged in farming and also operated a sawmill.

In the spring of 1805 **Miller** entered the active ministry under the direction of **Albright.** His successful labors are narrated in other connections, and need not be repeated here. About Christmas time, in 1808, while he and **John Dreisbach** were holding a meeting in Juniata County, his activities as an itinerant were cut short by a sudden attack of illness that permanently disabled him. He rode home, never again to take another field of labor. This was indeed a hard blow for the infant church. **Albright** had died this year, and now he to whom the Society looked for leadership, was disabled. But although driven by disease from the field, his indomitable spirit remained to cheer and his wise counsels to guide the little band in the work and served repeatedly as chairman of the annual conference. At the conference session held in his house in April, 1809, he submitted for approval

the manuscript of the Discipline which he had compiled. This work he published at his own expense this same year. In 1814 he published a biography of **Albright** and an excellent doctrinal book entitled *"Thätiges Christenthum."* (Practical Christianity.)

In the spring of 1812, **Miller** sold his property in Berks County and purchased a small farm about two miles below New Berlin. His brother **Solomon** followed him in a few years, locating in the town named, where he carried on his trade as a hatter and also superintended the newly-founded Evangelical Book Establishment. His physical condition gradually grew worse and terminated in death on April 5, 1816, at the early age of 42 years, one month and 19 days. His dying words were, *"Ich weis das Ich selig werde."* (I know I shall be saved.) **Rev. Henry Niebel** conducted the obsequies, preaching from Rev. 3:10. He was survived by his wife and at least five children, as follows: **Joseph, Samuel, John, Susan,** married in 1824 to **Isaac Peters,** and another whoes name is not known married to a **Hackenberg. Samuel,** who located at Lebanon, was quite a scholar. He published, in 1836, a very excellent book entitled "Kern-Wesen" (The Essentials). This was endorsed by the Eastern Conference and published by the Church. Later he left the Evangelicals and became a Lutheran minister. **Joseph** also resided in Lebanon County, and became a Reformed minister. **Mrs. Peters** died at New Berlin, leaving at least one son, **George N. H. Peters,** afterwards a Lutheran minister. The **Peters** and **Hackenberg** families removed to Springfield, Ohio, taking with them the widowed sisters (widows of **George** and **Solomon Miller**), where they soon after were laid to rest. They sleep close together, as do their husbands at New Berlin.

REV. JOHN DREISBACH undoubtedly fills a larger sphere in the history of the Evangelical Church than any of the coworkers of **Albright.** This is not altogether owing to his superior ability, but rather to the fact that his life was prolonged far beyond the lives of his immediate associates. He was the oldest son of **Martin Dreisbach, Jr.,** of Buffalo Valley, Union County, Pa. Concerning the excellent family from which he sprang the reader will find a fuller notice elsewhere. He was

born June 5, 1789, and as a youth evinced qualities far beyond one of his age. As elsewhere noted, his parental home was headquarters for the early Reformed evangelists and **Bishop Christian Newcomer,** who paved the way in that region for the subsequent success of the Evangelical evangelists. His young life touching such active spiritual forces, we need not wonder that he early inclined to an active Christian career. When the Dreisbach class was formed, in 1806, of which his father was the leader, young **John** also became a member.

When in the autumn of this year the intrepid and eloquent **John Walter** took charge of this field of labor, he gave young **Dreisbach** opportunity to develop his gifts for the ministry. In the spring of 1807 (Day of Pentecost), at a general meeting held in Penns Valley, Centre County, **Albright** gave him license as a preacher on probation. He now applied himself vigorously to his studies and preached with frequency and great acceptability. In November of this year he set out with **Christopher Spangler** and others to attend the first annual conference of the Church at the house of **Samuel Becker,** on the Muehlbach, in Lebanon County. At this conference he entered the itinerant ranks, and was assigned, with **George Miller,** as senior colleague to the old circuit.

When **Albright,** on Easter day, 1808, stationed the preachers for the last time, he assigned **John Walter** to the new circuit with **Dreisbach** as junior assistant. On this charge, which embraced a territory covering what now constitutes twelve counties, these men had about fifty preaching places. Later he worked again in connection with **George Miller.** On Christmas of this year his colleague, **Miller,** was seized with an illness which necessitated his immediate withdrawal from the active work. The burdens of this great field of labor now fell entirely on the shoulders of **Dreisbach,** who was still in his teens. His labors, hitherto arduous, were now doubled, and to the hardships that ensued must be laid the undermining of his constitution, necessitating his retirement from the active ministry at a time when the Church most needed him. Fortunately for him and the charge, God had in reserve two choice young men, who now came to his

assistance. They were **Mathias Betz** and **Henry Niebel,** both of whom entered the active ranks at the next conference.

At the second conference, held at the home of **George Miller** in 1809, new burdens were laid upon his youthful shoulders. He was now only twenty years of age, yet was made secretary of the conference and directed to prepare a Catechism for the use of the Church. It fell to his lot to take charge of the old circuit, which embraced all the eastern part of the state. His colleagues were **Henry Niebel** and **John Erb,** both his seniors in years. In the fall of this year he was ordained elder at the house of **Henry Eby,** near Lebanon, which indicates his rapid advancement.

From 1809 for five consecutive sessions of the conference **George Miller** was chairman and **Dreisbach** secretary. At the conference of 1814, in his father's house, he was chosen chairman, thus virtually at the age of twenty-five, he was the leader of the Church. His presidency continued for some years, including the first General Conference in 1816, which was also held at his parental home. As already said, his health was impaired by his strenuous service, and after much suffering from a nervous disorder, he was obliged to retire from the active ranks at the session of 1821.

Although **Dreisbach** had retired to private life, he nevertheless took a keen interest in public affairs. Great issues were at stake and men of probity were sought for by the people. Under pressure of circumstances he permitted the use of his name as a legislative candidate on the "Jacksonian" platform, in 1827, and was elected by a large majority. At the end of his first term he was again elected, but after his second term of service he retired from the political arena, sold his farm which was part of the old **Dreisbach** estate, and in 1831 removed to Pickaway County, Ohio. In course of time he served a number of charges in the Ohio Conference, and in 1854 he was elected editor of *The Evangelical Messenger,* the English organ of the Church. He edited the paper with ability until 1855, when he resigned because of his infirmities. He died August 20, 1871, aged 82 years. He was twice married, first in 1811 to **Catharine,** daughter of **Abraham Eyer.** She died in 1815, and a few years later he married her sister, **Fanny,** who bore him eleven children and

survived him till 1876, when she died at the age of 85 years. Two of his sons, **Abraham** and **Jacob,** became Evangelical preachers.

John Dreisbach possessed literary ability of a high order, as shown in both his prose and poetical productions. In 1809 he produced the first Catechism by order of the Conference. With **Henry Niebel** he compiled, by order of the Church, *"Das Saitenspiel,"* a large and excellent hymn book, which was printed in 1817. In 1821 he published a small song book entitled *"Geistliche Lieder"* (Spiritual Songs). With **Niebel** he revised and enlarged the Discipline in 1817.

Dreisbach was a man of progress and clearly foresaw the larger field of activity the Church would be providentially called to fill. He was the first to advocate the establishment of higher institutions of learning, to meet the new conditions of the age. Although in feeble health for many years, he kept in touch with all the activities of the Church, as evinced by his writings and remained a tower of strength to the end of his life.

REV. JACOB FRY was the son of **Jacob Fry, Sr.,** who in 1796 removed with a large family from Berks to Snyder County, Pa., near the present town of Middleburg. The father was a Reformed Pietist, and as early as 1800 opened his house as a preaching place for the evangelists **Pfrimmer, Newcomer** and others. He died soon after 1800, and his son, **Abraham Fry** (born 1768, died 1850), most worthily took his father's place as a supporter of the evangelists. When **Albright** made his appearance in this region as an evangelist, **Abraham Fry** found in him a man after his own heart, and thereafter his house was an Evangelical preaching place, and the home became the center of a great spiritual work. There **Albright** first met the younger brother, **Jacob Fry,** a gifted man, who, upon the establishment of the Evangelical work, evinced a desire to enter the ministry.

Jacob Fry's first efforts in the direction of the ministry were under the direction of **Rev. George Miller,** during his great revival work on the new circuit, in 1806. His further association with the intrepid **Walter,** who succeeded **Miller,** led him to decide to enter the active work. We accordingly find him at the first annual conference, in 1807, where he was accepted as a probationer and assigned to the new circuit with **Walter** in charge.

Later in the year these two brethren exchanged charges with the preachers of the old circuit which brought **Fry** to the work west of the Susquehanna River where some of the appointments were located. In this region he was so successful that in the Easter Assembly (1808), he was assigned by **Albright** to form a new charge of the territory which stretched westward through York, Adams, Cumberland and Franklin Counties, Pa., and Western Maryland, where **Albright** and others had sown the seed, which was ripe for the harvest. In the midst of his successful labors he became involved in some troubles which necessitated his withdrawal from the field, and he was excluded from the ministry, but was reinstated some years after.

Fry was one of the Evangelical pioneers of Ohio, and assisted the missionaries in establishing the work there. At the conference held at New Berlin, in 1819, he was ordained deacon and appointed to assist **Rev. Jacob Kleinfelter** on Canton Circuit, in Ohio. He located at the close of the year on account of family cares. At the conference of 1823 he was instructed "to seek and organize a new circuit." What this meant in the wilds of Ohio the reader may well imagine. We were told by fathers **Saylor** and **Hoffman** that when they were laboring in Ohio, in 1826, **Jacob Fry** was a great help to them and did much work as a pioneer. He took charge of appointments established by **Saylor** in that year. His name appears on the rolls when the Western Conference was organized in 1827 and he received a small share of the salary. His name does not again appear on the records after this and we are unable to trace him to his end, but that he remained in touch with the Church of his youth is evidenced by his sending obituary notices to the *Christliche Botschafter*.

REV. ABRAHAM LEESER, an early coworker with **Albright,** was the son of **Benedict Leeser,** born at the old **Leeser** homestead, two miles east of Barto, Berks County, Pa., in 1770. He was a brother of **Samuel Leeser,** at whose house **Albright** was ordained in 1803. He had a family when **Albright** first visited his community, although a prominent member of the Hoff Reformed church, near by, he was one of the first to open his home as a preaching place for the evangelists. He was a very gifted, consecrated man. Early in 1803 **Albright** made him an

assistant evangelist. He was the second to take the field under **Albright's** directions. In 1803 he with his young coworker, **John Walter,** ordained his spiritual father as a minister in the house of his brother, **Samuel Leeser.** He was never in robust health and could not long endure the hardships of an itinerant life. Broken in health, he retired from the field in the spring of 1805, and soon thereafter passed to his eternal reward, at the early age of 34 years. He was survived by his wife and three children. He died, like **Albright, Miller** and **Walter,** of consumption, caused by his hardships and exposure.

REV. ALEXANDER JAMISON was a resident at the Colebrookdale Iron Works in Berks County, near the present town of Boyertown, Pa. His house was one of the first preaching places. He seems to have been a talented man, but lacked the spirit of self-denial and consecration so necessary in those trying days. He entered the evangelistic work in the spring of 1804. It appears he was dissatisfied with the system of equal division of salary then in vogue. In 1805 he was given an extra allowance of salary, beside $60, for the purchase of a horse. In 1806 he was again granted a large amount above his dues, in order to satisfy him. This caused the brethren to pass a resolution not to accept any one hereafter as a minister, unless he was willing to abide by the rules of salary distribution. The records tell us that thereupon **Jamison** "returned to his former avocation." Therefore he was without a charge and seems to have withdrawn from all active participation in the work.

REVS. MATHIAS and **JOHN BETZ.**—We know nothing of these brothers until we meet them as members of the class organized by **Rev. George Miller** at Millheim, Centre County, in 1806. From references we are led to believe that **Mathias,** the younger, exercised the gifts of the ministry soon after this event. After Christmas of this year we find him coming to the assistance of the youthful **John Dreisbach,** who was left alone on the old circuit by the sudden illness of **Rev. George Miller,** his senior colleague. He joined the active ranks at the second conference (1809), and made a record as one of the most devoted and spiritual of all the evangelists. On the evening of

April 5, 1810, as he preached his valedictory at Manheim, Lancaster County, he sent the keen shaft of conviction for sin into the heart of a young man destined to be, next to **Albright**, the most commanding figure in the Evangelical Association. This was none other than **John Seybert**, afterwards bishop. After four years of brilliant service **Betz**, died of pneumonia, at Boalsburg, Centre County, in 1813, at the early age of thirty-one years.

JOHN BETZ was two years older than **Mathias**, and was one of the first local preachers of whom there is no official record. He was a pioneer Evangelical in Ohio, and founder of the town of Bettsville, in Seneca County, where he died in 1848, aged sixty-eight years.

REV. JOHN ERB.—This useful man was born near Millersville, Pa. We first hear of him in connection with the great revival along the Conestoga, in 1807, when he became a member of the Evangelical class. From his capabilities and early zeal we conclude that he began to exercise the functions of the ministry soon after his connection with the Evangelicals. Soon after Christmas, 1808, we find him as an assistant to **John Dreisbach** on the extensive new circuit, after the breakdown of **George Miller.** At the second conference, in 1809, he entered the itinerant ranks and labored with success from the beginning.

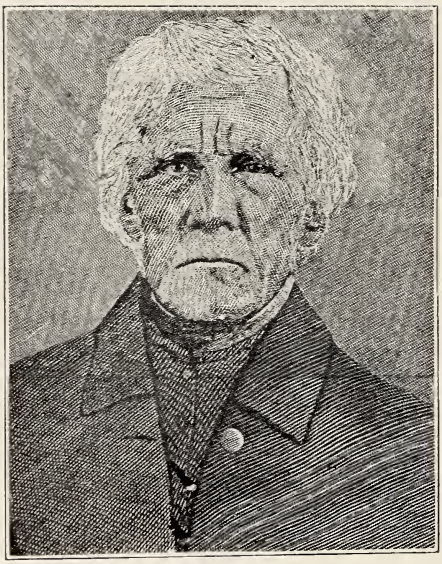
In 1813 he located because of ill health, and the year following suffered the loss of his wife, **Mary Becker**, daughter of **George Becker**, of the Muehlbach, in Lebanon County. In 1820 he again took the field and at this conference was elected presiding elder, being the third incumbent of that office. He was chairman of the conferences of 1821, 1822 and 1823. At the latter session he again located and removed to Ohio, after which we lose sight of him until 1851, when he again entered the active ranks. In 1857 disease compelled his retirement and he died after great suffering from cancer, February 12, 1858, in the seventy-second year of his age.

REV. HENRY NIEBEL, son of **Nicholas Niebel**, was born in Colebrookdale, Berks County, Pa., March 16, 1784. When still a youth his father removed to Union County. His parents were members of the Reformed Church, and the studies

of young **Henry** were directed with a view to the ministry of that Church. In early life he evinced an independence of mind that characterized him during life. When he was grown to manhood the crisis of his life was reached. He could not stand for the spiritual deadness that then pervaded such a large portion of his Church. The Reformed and United Brethren evangelists now made their appearance in his neighborhood. These, too, he discounted. In the winter of 1805-1806 he was engaged in teaching school, about five miles below Lewisburg, at Winfield. He had his home with that eminent Evangelical father, **Abraham Eyer,** who made it his business to explode the young man's ideas of his own righteousness, and led him to see the necessity of a personal experience of Christ. The result was that **Niebel's** views were brought in harmony with Evangelical truth, and withal, he realized a deep and rich spiritual experience that changed his life plans completely.

In the spring of 1806, that noble man of God, **George Miller,** was sent to the new circuit. One of the chief preaching places was at the home of **Father Eyer,** and **Niebel** was thus brought into contact with the evangelist. In the autumn of this year **Miller** formed the Eyer class and had the pleasure of adding the name of **Henry Niebel.**

From a reference by **Miller** in his autobiography concerning **Niebel,** it is quite evident that he began to exercise the gifts of ministry about this time. He was now twenty-four years of age, well equipped for service, and the work was opening all about him. When **Miller,** the senior minister on the new circuit in 1808, broke down at Christmas time, **Niebel** took the field as one of the assistants to his young friend and future brother-in-law, **John Dreisbach.** At the second session of the conference, in the spring of 1809, he entered the active ranks and from the first took a prominent place. Already in 1814 he was chosen secretary of the annual conference, was elected president of the body in 1815, and at the same session was made the second presiding elder. At the first General Conference, in 1816, he served as secretary, with his friend, **John Dreisbach,** as president, and both served in the same capacity at the second session of that body in 1820. On account of failing health he located in 1819; became effective



REV. HENRY NIEBEL.

again in 1829; was elected presiding elder in 1831, and was sent by the conference to Ohio in 1833, as the presiding elder of the western work. He served as presiding elder six years in Pennsylvania and ten years in Ohio. His services were very valuable to the Church, not only as a minister, but also as a literary man. He assisted **Dreisbach** in compiling the large hymn book, *"Das Saitenspiel,"* and the revised Discipline in 1817. He was married to **Mary Eyer,** daughter of **Abraham Eyer,** who died in 1857, in her seventieth year, and he finished his long, useful life on May 2, 1877, at the age of 93 years.

Rev. Abraham Niebel, one of the sons of **Henry,** was born in 1817, and died in Illinois in 1901. He was for half a century a prominent Evangelical minister, a member of the Pittsburgh Conference, except the years 1865-70 when he labored in the Illinois Conference. One of his sons, **B. H. Niebel,** also became an Evangelical minister and was for many years a presiding elder in Iowa, in the Des Moines Conference of the United Evangelical Church, and in 1906 was elected corresponding secretary of the Missionary Society and the Church Extension Society of this Church.

THE LOCAL MINISTRY OF ALBRIGHT'S TIME.

SOLOMON MILLER.—This pious and useful man was a son of **Jacob** and **Elisabeth Miller** and a brother of **Rev. George Miller,** born at Pottstown, Pa., in 1777. In a previous chapter the reader will see how he was brought to the light of saving truth through the ministry of **Albright.** He was one of the first class-leaders, and in 1806 was made a local preacher. Although he never took a separate field of labor, he did great service for the infant Church in various capacities and deserves a place in her annals as one of the founders. His life runs singularly parallel with that of his brother **George.** Both married daughters of **Col. Michael Brobst** and established homes near each other in Penn Township, Schuylkill County, and later near the home of their father-in-law, where **Solomon** lived in a house on his brother's place and carried on the business of a hatter. It was in his house that the second annual conference was held in 1809. In 1812 his brother **George** removed to New Berlin,

and **Solomon** followed in a few years and took charge of the newly-established printing house of the Church, at the same time continuing his trade as a hatter to make a living. He died in 1820 and was buried near his brother who had preceded him four years. He was married, about 1800, to **Maria Brobst,** who survived him, without children; removed from New Berlin to Springfield, Ohio, with her widowed sister, where she died.

CHRISTOPHER SPANGLER was one of the most consecrated men the Church has ever had. He was the son of **George Spangler,** a German immigrant, and was born in Northampton County, Pa., in the year 1767. Soon after the Revolution his father removed with his family to the vicinity of New Berlin, where some of the sons lived and died, and soon after 1800 **Christopher** removed to the vicinity of Rebersburg, Centre County. Early in 1805 he met **Jacob Albright** at the home of **Paul Bachman,** in Millheim, which was one of **Albright's** preaching places. It is probable that there **Spangler** heard **Albright** preach, since he had gone there on **Bachman's** invitation to meet him. The outcome of the meeting was that **Spangler** invited the evangelist to preach in his new stone mansion which he was then building. From this time on the home was a preaching place and **Spangler** one of **Albright's** strong supporters.

Through **Spangler** a class was organized here in 1806, of which he was made the leader. In the fall of 1807 he accompanied the youthful **John Dreisbach** to the first annual conference, which was held at the house of **Samuel Becker,** in Lebanon County, and there he was licensed as a local preacher, in which capacity he served the Church most acceptably for a period of half a century. Almost up to the time of his home-going he preached the Word with zeal and fervency. He died in great peace, in 1855, at the advanced age of 88 years.

JOHN THOMAS, Jr., was the son of **John Thomas, Sr.,** and his wife was **Anna Mary Rice.** He was born near Shafferstown, Pa., in 1785. When a child his parents moved to Decatur Township, Mifflin County, where they were visited as early as 1801 by **Jacob Albright,** who from that date made the **Thomas** home a kind of headquarters of his work in that region.

Thomas was an active participant in the wonderful meetings held by **Albright** and **Walter** at his father's home, which are elsewhere described. In 1807 he was granted local license, his certificate being signed by **Albright** himself. Some time prior to 1825, in company with the greater part of the old Thomas class, he emigrated to Wayne County, Ohio, where he did much to build up the cause of Christ. He died as the result of an accident, September 26, 1836, aged 54 years.

JACOB PHILIPS was born in Northampton County, Pa. He was the son of **George** and brother of **Conrad Philips,** all of whom figure prominently in the beginning of **Albright's** work. All three were present at the ordination of **Albright** in 1803. When the Philips class was organized in 1800, **Jacob Philips** was chosen its leader and in 1806 he was licensed as a local preacher at the council held at **George Becker's.** His death occurred in 1809.

CHARLES BISSE lived in Rock Hill Township, Bucks County, Pa. He was one of the first to open his home to **Albright** for a preaching place prior to 1800. He was a member of the Walter class and was present at **Albright's** ordination in 1803. He was licensed as a local preacher at the council of 1806, and executed the office well until his death, October 20, 1847, at the age of 75 years.

MICHAEL MAIZE was for many years one of the strong pillars of the Church. He was born near Shafferstown, Pa. In 1794 he was married to **Barbara,** daughter of **Michael** and **Catharine Smith.** About 1796 **Maize,** with his widowed mother and some other children, removed to Union County, and located on a farm two miles below New Berlin. His wife's people accompanied them and were among the first residents of Lewisburg. Both families were of the Reformed Church and were a spiritual people. **Michael Maize** opened his home as a place of preaching for the early evangelists of that time. As early as 1804, and perhaps earlier, **Albright** and his coworkers found access to his home, and from that time **Maize** cast his lot with the **"Albright People."**

In the obituary of **Maize** it is stated that he was the first Evan-

gelical class leader in the bounds of the conference. Elsewhere it will be seen that **Rev. George Miller** organized over half a dozen classes in this region within a short time, of which the Maize class seems to have been the first. **Maize** became a local preacher very early, and as there is no record of his licensure we are inclined to believe he obtained his license at a general meeting in the days of **Albright.** He died in 1841, aged 71 years, and his wife followed him in 1848, aged 72 years. Their bodies repose in the Evangelical cemetery at New Berlin, Pa.

FREDERICK HERPSTER, Jr., was the son of **Frederick Herpster, Sr.,** who came from Tulpehocken, Pa., to Decatur Township, Mifflin County, soon after the Revolutionary War, in which he had been a soldier. **Frederick Herpster, Jr.,** was married to **Susan,** daughter of **John** and **Anna Mary Thomas.** He also had two brothers, **John** and **George,** who married **Barbara** and **Catharine,** respectively, also daughters of **Father Thomas.** All these were of the first fruits of **Albright** at the Thomas appointment, in 1802-1803. **Frederick Herpster** was the first class leader, and was also one of the early local preachers, of whose license there is no record. He was a very prominent man and doubtless received his license at a general meeting, like his brother-in-law, **John Thomas, Jr.**

EVANGELISTIC CONTEMPORARIES WHOSE LABORS TOUCHED THAT OF REV. JACOB ALBRIGHT.

BISHOP FRANCIS ASBURY as the first incumbent of the episcopal office, may be regarded as the founder of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. He was born in England in 1745, and died in Virginia in 1816. At the early age of sixteen years he was made a local preacher by **Rev. John Wesley,** founder of Methodism. At twenty-two he entered the itineracy, and at twenty-six was sent by **Wesley** to America as a missionary. He succeeded in planting Methodism in many colonies, despite the American Revolution with its many hindrances. Although unordained, he succeeded in forming something of an organization which in 1784 numbered over eighty ministers, for the most part unordained.

In 1784 **Wesley** sent **Dr. Thomas Coke** to America, with instructions to organize the work and confer ordination on **Asbury.** This event which took place at Baltimore, Md., on Christmas, 1784, marks the official beginning of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. **Rev. William Otterbein,** one of the founders of the United Brethren Church, assisted in the ordination of **Asbury,** and thereafter a warm friendship existed between the two men.

Although **Asbury** was in many respects a great man, he lacked vision as to what true Methodism stood for. This led him to reject overtures from organizations laboring for the conversion of the Germans for organic union. He considered such a course "impractical," as he informed **Rev. John Dreisbach,** of the Evangelical Association, in 1810.

A study of the correspondence between the Methodist and the United Brethren conferences, discloses the fact that he failed also in his opportunity respecting the latter movement, and so both the United Brethren and the Evangelical Association proceeded, each separately, to fulfill their respective missions, up to the present period. After **Asbury's** death the Methodist Church reversed this exclusive policy and now has flourishing sections separately organized among the Germans, Swedes, Italians and others.

OTTERBEIN and **BOEHM,** founders of the United Brethren Church. **Rev. William Otterbein** was born at Dillenburg, Germany, June 4, 1726, and died in Baltimore, Md., Nov. 17, 1813, aged 87 years. His father was a prominent and pious Reformed minister who had five ministerial sons, all of whom were earnest, spiritual men. **Otterbein** was educated at the University of Herborn, and in 1752 was sent to America as a Reformed missionary, being one of the five who were sent at this time, headed by **Rev. Michael Schlatter,** the founder of the Reformed Synod in America.

Upon his arrival, **Otterbein** took charge of the Reformed church in Lancaster, Pa. He introduced prayer-meetings in his congregation, which caused much opposition to him. He also introduced the big meetings, which were spiritual gatherings for prayer, preaching and testimony, and attended by "converted

people" generally. His evangelistic operations extended into the Tulpehocken region and many souls were converted. About 1764 he removed to Frederick, Md., where his labors in the Reformed Church were also attended with spiritual awakenings. In 1765 he took charge of the Reformed church at York, Pa., and great spiritual quickenings took place through him, not only in his own church, but in surrounding communities.

In 1774 he removed to Baltimore and took charge of a large Reformed congregation, which soon felt the power of his spiritual ministry and virtually separated itself from the authority of the Church, calling itself "The Evangelical Reformed Church." Of this society **Otterbein** remained the nominal pastor until his death, and this society was the nucleus of the United Brethren Church. Because of the corporate name of the society, and the fact that **Otterbein** remained in nominal relation to the Reformed Church, notwithstanding that he was a founder of a new denomination, and a bishop of the same, the Reformed Church has ever regarded him as one of her ministers, as her historians show.

REV. **MARTIN BOEHM** was born in Lancaster County, Pa., in 1725. His parents were Swiss Mennonites in whose faith **Martin** was reared. After becoming a minister of the gospel he was truly converted and raised his voice against the dead formalism of his Church. Revivals and conversions followed his labors in many places. His Church then raised a great opposition to his evangelism, and specially because he associated with others "of a strange speech," meaning people of other religious persuasions. The result was his expulsion from the Mennonite Church. **Boehm** nevertheless continued his work independently, and the "converted people" of all churches stood by him.

Sometime between 1766 and 1768 he held a so-called big meeting at the house of **Isaac Long,** in Landis Valley, about six miles northeast of Lancaster. To this meeting **Rev. William Otterbein** also came. After listening to a sermon by **Boehm** he was deeply impressed with the spirit of the man. Arising from his seat he went to **Boehm** and embraced him, exclaiming *"Wir sind Brueder."* ("We are brethren.")

After this meeting **Otterbein** and **Boehm** labored more or less for some years in coöperative harmony. Spiritual people of various churches clave to them. Other spiritual ministers of the Reformed and Mennonite churches labored in connection with them. This work continued in this way for years, but found no recognition by the old churches. It now became necessary to authorize some who were called thereto, to preach the gospel, thus creating an unordained itinerant ministry. In 1789 these evangelistic elements focalized in the form of a conference, **Otterbein** and **Boehm** being the leading spirits, and at a conference held in 1800, both were elected bishops, and the newly-founded Church, hitherto called "United Brethren," was named "The United Brethren in Christ," to distinguish it from the Moravian, which is known by the former title. Such in brief is the origin of the United Brethren Church, which grew up side by side with the "Albright Brethren," or Evangelical Association.

BISHOP CHRISTIAN NEWCOMER.—This eminent man of God was born in Lancaster County, Pa., in 1749, and was the son of **Wolfgang Newcomer,** a Swiss Mennonite. After his marriage he removed to Washington County, Md., where he came under the influence of the founders of the United Brethren Church, **William Otterbein** and others. He was made a minister of that denomination and was a member of its first regular conference in 1789. In 1813 he was elected bishop and remained in office until his death in March, 1830, in the 82d year of his age.

Bishop Newcomer's journal, published in 1834, and often quoted in this work, shows him to have been a man of heroic mould, truly apostolic in character. We have never found a more intrepid and tireless herald of the cross in history than he. His diary shows that he crossed the Allegheny Mountains on horseback nineteen times after he was 61 years of age. When 81 years old he made his nineteenth episcopal tour to the far West, on horseback, traveling one day fifty-two miles, and yet this old hero, just before his death, deplored his want of zeal in his ministry in these words, *"Nothing am I more sorry for than that I have not served my Lord and Master more faithfully."*

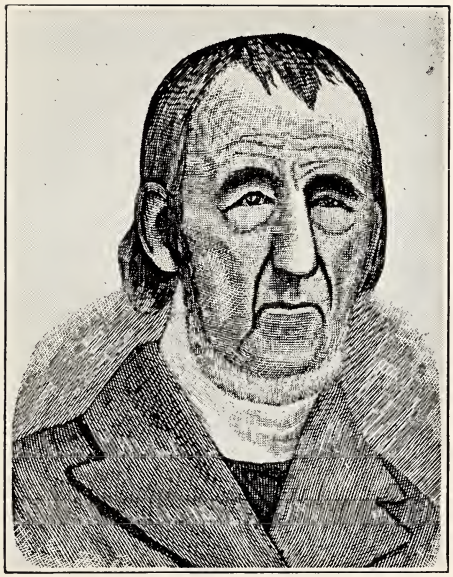
Bishop Newcomer was in intimate touch with **Rev. Jacob Albright** and his work from the beginning. He was present and

assisted at the dedication of the Reformed church at Shafferstown, October 8, 1797, at which time **Albright** preached to an overflow meeting in the market house, which event marks the beginning of his ministry. On several subsequent occasions **Newcomer** and **Albright** participated in joint meetings, as elsewhere recorded.

Newcomer's Journal discloses many efforts to unite the Albright Brethren and the United Brethren into one body. His last effort was in 1816, when he attended the first Evangelical General Conference, and plead for union. The outcome was the "Social Conference" between delegates of the two denominations, at the house of **Rev. Henry Kummler**, six miles east of Hagerstown, Md., in February, 1817, which resulted in failure.

REV. ADAM ETTINGER, Sr., was born November 19, 1760, and died near Dover, York County, Pa., July 26, 1809. He was reared in this vicinity, and as a youth we find him enrolled as a member of the York County militia and rendering active service in the Revolution.[1] He was a member of the Reformed Church and in early life came in contact with the Pietistic group of that denomination whose evangelistic activities did so much to keep alive the fires of vital godlines among the Pennsylvania Germans, and pave the way for the founding of the United Brethren and Evangelical Association denominations. His wife, **Anna Maria**, was a daughter of **George Stouch**, and sister of **Rev. S. Stouch**, of the Lutheran Church. She died in 1842, aged 76 years. **Ettinger** exercised the office of the ministry in connection with the evangelists prior to 1800. The records of the Reformed Synod show that he was examined for and granted license to preach in May, 1803. This was renewed in 1804, and in 1805 he was ordained a minister. For some time he had charge of the Reformed congregations at Abbottstown and vicinity, and for a brief period also at Hanover. He actively coöperated with **Otterbein** in the evangelistic movement that resulted in the formation of the United Brethren Church,[2] but never, to our knowledge, attended the Separatist Conferences,

1 Pennsylvania Archives (Sixth Series), Vol. XII, p. 656.
2 See Gossler's Reply to Gock, p. 153.



REV. A. ETTINGER. B. 1787. D. 1877.

but strictly adhered to the Church.[3] The year following his death (1809), **Rev. John Walter** and other pioneers of the Evangelical Association began their labors in the vicinity of his home, and his wife and entire family united with the Evangelicals. Three of the sons became ministers of the latter connection, **Adam, Jr.** (born 1787, died 1877), entered the ministry in 1816 and was the first editor of the *"Christliche Botschafter";* **Benjamin** (born 1794, died 1838), entered the ministry in 1816, and traveled a number of years. **Jonas,** a local preacher, and said to have been the first Evangelical in Kansas, died near Leavenworth, in 1863, aged 78 years.

THE VOICE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE. 1 Cor. 1:26-31.

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called:* but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, *yea,* and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence.

But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

3 See Bishop Newcomer's Journal, pp. 141, 142, 160.

THE END.

123 - [illegible] meeting
(61 [illegible])

60 - Res. [illegible] (1[illegible])

135 - [illegible] + [illegible]

1[illegible] Hengesten [illegible]

140 [illegible]